

# TEN YEARS

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THE WORLD  
ON THE WAY TO WAR  
1930-1940

By DWIGHT E. LEE



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TO

*My FATHER and MOTHER*

HENRY AUSTIN AND EUNICE CULL LEE



## *PREFACE*

THE aim of this book is to present both a factual survey and an interpretation of European international affairs in the decade of the thirties in order to make as clear as is possible at this time the more immediate causes and the character of the war that began in 1939. Other surveys dealing with much the same period, together with at least a score of books by journalists and statesmen having intimate knowledge of recent happenings, have been published. With one or two exceptions, however, the one-volume surveys have attempted to cover a longer chronological period than the last decade and have thus gone less deeply into it, while some of them and most of the memoirs or diaries of statesmen and journalists are characterized by a lack either of historical perspective or of personal detachment from the absorbing events they recount. I have not sought in this book to supplant either type, for there will always be those who want merely a bird's-eye view and those who enjoy the richer, more personal, and more colorful narratives of actors and eye-witnesses. Instead, I have attempted to fit the variegated pieces of material into a mosaic that reveals at the same time much of the detail and a comprehensible pattern.

In this task I do not claim to be an impartial automaton. Discerning readers will discover certain convictions. Two, for example, are that the events of 1930-40 are in part the result of a long historical development, and that the acts of politicians and peoples are not on the one hand purely capricious nor on the other determined solely by economic or by any one factor - but by many, including intellectual and spiritual influences. The reader may perceive that I believe, while admitting the failure of the democracies to live up to their responsibilities, that nevertheless democracy as a way of life is still the best of which we know. Furthermore, he may discover my conviction that if there is to be peace and security again on this earth within an appreciable limit of time, not only must the peoples of Europe work together, but also the United States must learn to work with them, for all face fundamentally the same problems. Time after time, I have been conscious in writing of France or Great Britain in the past decade that there, but for the Grace of God, goes the United States; and that it ill behooves us in America to regard the Europeans as inferior to or greatly different from ourselves

either in their reactions toward crises in human affairs or in their ideals of the good life. I hope, however, that these and other 'prejudices' have not prevented me from approaching my subject with intellectual honesty which means applying the same yardstick to each statesman and each country and weighing in the same scales each bit of evidence and information to determine its intrinsic value.

In conclusion, there remains one of the pleasantest tasks of an author, that of acknowledging the help and inspiration of his friends and assistants. My former students and my colleagues at Clark University who have patiently listened to and often wisely criticized my discussions of current events must remain unnamed, although they are gratefully remembered. I appreciate the generosity of the trustees and President Wallace W. Atwood of Clark University in granting me a semester's leave of absence in which to begin work on this book, and the constant encouragement and help in numberless ways of Professor George Hubbard Blakeslee, chairman of the Department of History and International Relations. Of those who have been directly concerned with the preparation of the manuscript I am grateful for secretarial assistance to Madeleine Aldrich Franklin; for help in checking references and running down will-o'-the-wisps of information to Douglas C. Hebb; and for valuable aid in assembling material for Chapters Nine and Eleven and criticisms of others to Edwin Costrell. I feel an especial indebtedness, however, to Emil H. Grodberg, who has assisted me in almost every phase of the work and in particular, because of his greater knowledge of the subject, has helped me to find my way through the mazes of economic fact and theory. Finally, I owe more than I can express to Margaret Shipley Lee, who not only has read the manuscript most painstakingly and helped to smooth out many a tangled passage, but also has suffered the fate of the wife of a writer who has shamefully neglected the social amenities for his work.

DWIGHT E. LEE

WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS  
*November 24, 1941*

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## CHAPTER ONE

### ECONOMICS AND POLITICS, 1930-32

CHOICE of the years 1930-31 as a starting-point for discussion of the events leading to the Second World War has more justification than is often the case with chronological divisions in history. Besides having the merit of opening a decade and of standing approximately midway between the peace settlement of 1919-20 and the war which began in 1939, they represent a watershed in European affairs.

In 1930-31 the post-war hopes of peace and security began to give way to pessimism which gradually deepened into despair as institutions of law and order disappeared beneath the waves of international chaos and anarchy. At the same time, confidence in triumphant democracy began to give way to doubt before the challenge of its avowed enemies Fascism and Nazism and its avowed friend Soviet Communism. Moreover, the nineteenth-century order of international economic interdependence, resting upon relatively free trade, stable currency, and the naval and financial supremacy of Great Britain, was replaced by a régime of economic nationalism in which states sought in cut-throat competition to achieve autarchy. All these changes were inextricably bound up with the fact that the political, economic, and military predominance of the satisfied Powers of Europe gradually disappeared after 1931 because of the triumphant rise of the dissatisfied and revisionist Powers.

#### *1. Hopes and Handicaps of the Nineteen-Twenties*

Yet in 1930, on the eve of the great economic depression, Europe along with the rest of the world was experiencing a mood of cheerfulness and hope. The first five years of the nineteen-twenties, which had been filled principally with the various tasks of settling down after four years of war, were followed by an era of some progress in the building of a new order. The Dawes Committee's Plan of 1924 for the payment of German reparations paved the way for a reconciliation between the

Reich and its neighbors which resulted in the Locarno Pacts of 1925. Briefly, these provided for acceptance of the Versailles territorial settlement in the West and a German pledge to seek changes in the East only by peaceful means. They also made possible the entry of Germany into the League of Nations. Under the guidance of Stresemann of Germany and Briand of France European council chambers enjoyed an atmosphere of friendliness. The Soviet Union, although still something of an outcast, cooperated with the other Powers in attempting to solve the problem of disarmament. The London Naval Agreement of 1930 carried further the naval limitation begun at Washington in 1921. The League of Nations grew daily in strength and prestige as it attempted to maintain peace and promote cooperation. The Young Plan of 1929 offered a 'final' settlement of the reparations problem that was regarded as highly satisfactory by all but a minority of the people concerned.

It is true that there was a darker side to the picture of the first post-war decade which people were too prone to ignore. The First World War had left a legacy which helped in no small measure to aggravate the effects of the economic depression when it came. Out of the war's physical and moral destructiveness came chaotic and unstable conditions. The difficulty of shifting from wartime to peacetime economy, the disruption of trade caused by the war and perpetuated by the new post-war boundaries, and the widespread inflation and financial instability prevented a return to happy living conditions. The habits of four years of violence, inhumanity, and regimentation were not easily sloughed off, but found expression in political gangsterism of which the Fascists and the Nazis were but two examples. The disillusionment of intellectuals and liberals, the discontent of the masses who were poorly prepared for their newly acquired political responsibilities, and the weakness of leadership wearied by wartime exertions caused a feverish search for new faiths and new leaders. Among all the 'isms — pacifism, dadaism, nudism, communism, and the rest — nationalism seemed most attractive. Heightened by emphasis upon self-determination and by wartime propaganda of hatred and revenge, nationalist feeling helped to increase economic chaos and to prevent the establishment of a sound international order.

In international affairs the ideal of cooperation represented by the League of Nations was opposed by the tradition of power politics and by the habits and thinking of the war years. The

victorious Powers in their efforts to guarantee security not only developed a preponderant group of states possessing the military force to prevent any change in the *status quo*, but also prevented the League of Nations from becoming an effective instrument of peaceful revision. Thus, the dawn of a new order which many had hailed at the end of the First World War turned out to be the red glow of the victory bonfires lit by the victors to celebrate their prowess in arms. That is not to deny that there was a wide divergence in the politics of the European nations, nor to assert that there was no attempt at revision of unjust peace terms. Many statesmen by 1930 were earnestly trying to remove the causes of hatred and ill-feeling, and might well have succeeded if they had been given more time.

By and large, however, the majority of the leaders among the victorious Powers glossed over the imperfections of the peace settlement and except for the admission that there were a few 'sore spots' insisted that the principles and the methods followed were sound. The events of the nineteen-thirties were to prove how short-sighted was this view, for they revealed the cracks and crevices in the peace structure over which the optimism that prevailed between 1925 and 1930 had thrown a veil.

## *2. Economic and Political Problems, 1930-31*

It is a little hard to understand why Europe did not pay more attention to such evidence of an approaching storm as the New York stock-market crash of October 24, 1929. To be sure, the statesmen were busy in 1930 completing the reparations settlement and the naval conference at London. They were also watching the effect of the agreement between France and Germany by which the army of occupation was withdrawn completely from the Rhineland on June 30, five years ahead of the Versailles schedule. There was, moreover, the always troublesome tension between Poland and Germany over Upper Silesia, Danzig, and the Corridor, three of Europe's 'sore spots,' as well as Franco-Italian ill-feeling over a half-dozen Mediterranean questions.

As a matter of fact Europe was also engrossed in an economic problem of its own. With the question of reparations so confidently believed settled, Europe turned to the study of tariffs in an effort to prevent the strangulation of international trade by the ever-rising duties adopted everywhere out of consideration

for national economic interests. The United States in 1929 did help to revive an interest in this matter by the discussion of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Bill. For a time it seemed as if Europe might find at least economic unity in its desire to punish the United States for raising barriers to European goods.

As always, however, politics were linked with economics in the debate over tariffs. That supple French statesman, Aristide Briand, who was honorary president of a promotional organization called the European Customs Union, as well as Foreign Minister, bore witness to the close connection when he proposed a European union or federation which would serve at the same time to keep the peace and to solve Europe's economic ills. He began to discuss the idea seriously in July 1929 and formally proposed it at Geneva during the League Assembly in September. The reception of the idea was a mixed one, though enough support was mustered to encourage Briand's circulation on May 17, 1930, of a memorandum setting forth in a little more precise but still somewhat vague manner his ideas and suggestions.

This memorandum made it clear that, in French eyes, the European union was to be another means of security, and if Briand left any doubt that the union was to be consecrated to the maintenance of the *status quo*, his French critics, including the publicist Pertinax and the statesman Poincaré, hastened to dispel it. The replies from the European Governments, though they all agreed that something should be done about the problem of tariff walls and that the ills of agricultural Central and South-eastern Europe could probably best be solved in cooperation with the industrial North and West, at the same time revealed the fundamental political cleavages in Europe which spelled disaster for the union project.

Germany, outstanding spokesman for the revisionists, insisted that modifications in the treaties which would put all states on a basis of equality must precede an effective union. Some of the smaller and formerly neutral states like the Netherlands and the Scandinavian nations feared that the plan might weaken the League of Nations and saw little advantage in an organization separate from it. Poland, Czechoslovakia, and other succession states sided with France in insisting that, if made a part of the League, the union was but a natural outgrowth of the Locarno spirit. They also insisted upon union first, and revision, if any, within its framework.

It was agreed in September 1930 that the union should be connected with the League and that a Commission of Inquiry for European Union should be set up with Briand as chairman and Sir Eric Drummond, Secretary-General of the League, as secretary in order to pursue further the question of organization and activities. This step represented a victory for the French and the pro-League states. At the meeting of the Commission in January 1931, however, the opponents of France won a victory when they put through a motion that Soviet Russia, Turkey, and Iceland should be invited to join the Commission. Not only were Russia and Turkey outside the League, but the significant point is that at least one of them was revisionist and that all three were outside the French political orbit. Thus it became clear once more that the hope of revision on the one hand and the fear of it on the other were the factors of greatest importance in determining the attitude toward the proposed union.

Following the January meeting, the Commission through especially appointed committees took part in discussions concerning the now acute Danubian and Balkan agrarian crises. They discussed measures for the disposal of existing and future grain surpluses, and for extending agricultural credits to East European farmers. But little united action on the tariff problem was forthcoming either from the Commission or from the third League Conference for Concerted Economic Action convened at Geneva in March. No doubt both agencies did encourage bilateral and other negotiations. At Oslo on December 22, 1930, a tariff truce convention was concluded between Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Belgium. On the other hand, French industrialists blocked the success of negotiations in April between Great Britain and France over a 25 per cent reduction in duties. Other countries to whom Great Britain proposed tariff reduction neither accepted nor rejected her suggestion. While politics played its part in the failure during 1931 to solve the tariff problem, equally important was economic nationalism — that policy of attempting to build up the industries and economic security of each national state regardless of the consequences to the world or to the European community.

But there was one notable success in bilateral economic negotiations which fell upon Europe like a bombshell. That was the Austro-German customs union, signed on March 19 and announced to the world two days later. Both countries represented their work as an application of the principles proposed by Briand

for European union and declared that their agreement was open to the adherence of other nations. France, Italy, and Czechoslovakia, fearful of a more powerful Germany, took the view that this was the first step toward revision of the peace treaties and a violation, not only of the Treaty of St. Germain, but also of the Protocol of 1922 by which Austria had promised not to alienate her political independence. The matter was referred to the World Court, but, three days before its decision of September 5 which upheld by one vote the French contention, both Germany and Austria announced the abandonment of the proposed customs union.

In this instance as in that of the plan for European union, whose well-nigh useless Commission of Inquiry continued to exist through 1939, although its last meeting was held on October 1, 1937, political rather than economic considerations had determined the outcome. In each case the promoters were suspected of using economic projects for the common good with which to cloak 'the political aggrandizement of France in the one case and of Germany in the other.'<sup>1</sup> But on the economic side, nationalistic policies, whose strongest supporters were often business men, were inimical to either European or Austro-German union. This became more and more apparent as the world economic crisis deepened and its import was brought painfully home to Europe by the series of bank failures which began with that of the Austrian Kredit-Anstalt on May 11, 1931.

### *3. Europe and the World Depression*

Before surveying further the outstanding events of 1931, that 'annus terribilis' as A. J. Toynbee has called it, a general review of the economic crisis and its implications may help to clarify the actual developments in Europe.

If the figures of world population and production for 1925 and 1929 are compared with those of 1913, the optimism of Europe and the United States in 1929-30, even after the stock-market crash and the subsequent shrinkage in production and employment, does not seem misplaced.

Such figures show that by 1929 both Europe and the world had made an impressive comeback, economically, in the period 1920-29. What these figures fail to indicate are the maladjustments which arose from the impact of the World War and which

<sup>1</sup> *Survey of International Affairs*, 1931, p. 36.

TABLE I.<sup>2</sup> REGIONAL ESTIMATES OF PRODUCTION AND TRADE, 1913 AND 1925  
1913 = 100

Region	Population	Production	Volume of Trade
Europe.....	101	102	91
North America.....	119	126	139
Rest of World.....	106	124	126
World.....	105	116	107

TABLE II.<sup>3</sup> REGIONAL ESTIMATES OF PRODUCTION AND TRADE, 1925 AND 1929  
1925 = 100

Region	Population	Foodstuffs	Raw Materials	Volume of Trade
Europe.....	105	110	131	122
North America.....	106	97	114	119
Rest of World.....	103	105	119	112
World.....	104	105	120	119

were the underlying causes for the world economic crisis of the nineteen-thirties. Some of them, such as those brought about by the change from a wartime to a peacetime economy, were the direct result of the war. Others, such as the relative increase in productivity and trade of American and Far Eastern countries in comparison with Europe, were merely trends which were hastened by the exigencies of the war. Economic nationalism, which had been gathering headway since the opening of the twentieth century, was another movement spurred on by the war, since every belligerent was forced to adopt a nationalistic economic policy as a war measure. After the 1914-18 débâcle, some efforts were made to return to the relatively free and stable international trade conditions which still existed before 1914. Yet the nationalistic spirit of the new European states, the fear of a new war and the desire to prepare for it by the promotion of economic as well as political independence, and the attempts of the World War victors to obstruct the growth in strength of their former enemies led to an increase of efforts to control trade and protect national interests by means of tariffs, trade quotas, and similar measures. In these efforts, politicians in each country were supported by the strongly organized groups who stood to gain by protection from outside competition, while the unorganized and inarticulate consumers paid the price.

In view of the sharply accelerated movement toward economic nationalism, short-sightedly adopted in the face of economic dis-

<sup>2</sup> League of Nations, *World Economic Survey, 1931-32* (Geneva, 1932), p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

locations caused by the war, it is not surprising that collapse came. Although the various factors which help to explain the causes of the economic depression differed in importance from country to country, few economists would deny that the restrictive trade policies practiced by most countries of the world played an extremely important part in causing, prolonging, and intensifying the economic crisis. Whatever its faults and virtues, capitalism cannot operate efficiently in the international field without stability. Constant and frequent revising of tariff schedules, especially in an upward direction, frequent denunciation of commercial treaties, and instability of credit and monetary conditions prevented that free and uninterrupted flow of goods and services between countries upon which the system had hitherto been based. In a world geared to economic interdependence, attempts at economic independence led almost inevitably to unemployment, business failures, and a lower standard of living, unavoidable accompaniments of the breakdown or crisis in the whole economic system.

A few figures will indicate the severity of the economic landslide which started in 1929 and reached bottom in 1932. In the United States, the wholesale price of raw materials dropped 39 per cent from 1929 to 1932; in Canada, 38 per cent; in Germany, 31 per cent. In the United States, the wholesale price of manufactured goods fell 26 per cent; in Canada, 22 per cent; in Germany, 21 per cent.<sup>4</sup> On January 25, 1933, the introduction to the report of the experts assigned to draw up an agenda for a World Economic Conference asserted that unemployment in 1932 involved, at a conservative estimate, at least thirty million workers, not including families or dependents. The total value of world trade in 1932 was only one third that of 1929; and the quantum of goods in foreign trade fell by 25 per cent, the largest fall on record. In the period 1929-32, national incomes fell in some countries as much as 40 per cent.<sup>5</sup>

In this general world-wide crisis there were certain special features — economic, psychological, and political — which were of peculiar significance for Europe. One of the most important was the relationship between the Continent and the American money market. The attempt of the Federal Reserve System to check the flow of gold into the United States by maintaining easy money conditions in the New York financial market unfortu-

<sup>4</sup> League of Nations, *World Economic Survey, 1931-32* (Geneva, 1932), p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen King-Hall, *Our Own Times* (London, 1936), I, 266 and *passim*.



nately encouraged not only Americans but also Europeans to borrow at low interest rates in order to reap advantage from the rising stock market. Thus Europeans shared in the boom and the crash of that market. Moreover, up to 1929, the United States exported almost every year a large amount of capital, but in that year, even before the crash came, that source of European economic expansion began to dry up because American funds were flowing into the more remunerative stock market. Whereas in 1928 the United States exported nearly one billion dollars in capital, in 1929 exports had fallen to \$221,000,000.<sup>6</sup> Thus the stock-market boom not only attracted funds from Europe but also cut off a source of capital upon which Europe had come to rely. This situation helped to aggravate the European crisis when the crash came.

For an appreciation of the psychological effect of the depression, it must be remembered that the crisis came to Europe as the culmination of a longer period of economic maladjustment and distress than was the case in America and thus produced a somewhat different mental attitude from that in the United States. In both Europe and America fear was undoubtedly the predominant emotion — fear of the well-to-do that they would lose their comfort either through loss of capital or through revolution, and fear of the poor that they might starve or be shot for refusing to starve. But in Europe in addition to this fear there was a very considerable element of despair, whereas in America there was surprise and indignation that such things could happen in the proverbial land of plenty.

European pessimism had long been evident. Spengler's *Decline of the West* was a notable example of it. But in 1931 pessimism deepened into hopelessness. The eighteenth-century concept of triumphant human progress was discarded. Europeans questioned whether their civilization had not reached its zenith and begun a permanent decline before the 'machine' civilization of the United States and the 'Asiatic barbarism' of Soviet Russia. Some pointed to the 'rising tide of color' and particularly to the economic progress of Japan as dangers from which Europe could not escape. Europe was now but a small peninsula of the great Eurasian continent from which the glories of political and economic world supremacy had perhaps passed forever.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, 'The Balance of International Payments of the United States in 1932,' *Trade Information Bulletin*, No. 814 (Washington, 1933), p. 35.

While there had been a relative rise in the economic importance of the United States, Japan, and other parts of the world, statistics by no means justified such despair. Its significance, however, lay not in its justification or lack of it, but in its preparation of the European mind for desperate measures. Still more this hopelessness was of tremendous importance in that it took the heart out of European liberalism which had grown up and flourished in the nineteenth-century political and economic order that now seemed doomed.

Over against the liberals, who realized the implications of the crisis, stood the reactionaries and the radicals. On the one hand, the reactionaries were not now any more willing to admit that a change was taking place than they ever are. They tended to regard the crisis as temporary and therefore strove to put things back as they were. They refused to recognize that economics had become the principal content of politics, not by any willful or capricious action of a group or a party, but inexorably as a result of developments which had begun in the previous century and were now tremendously accelerated by the economic crisis. In both domestic and international policies, therefore, they bewailed government interference in business and the mixing of economics and politics.

Radicals, on the other hand, welcomed the death of the old order and boldly advocated striking out into a new. Their methods were those which had been in preparation for a long time and may be summed up as totalitarian — all to the State and the State over all. There was a certain ruthlessness about their economic and social planning from which the liberals inevitably shrank. The latter recognized that one possible result for Europe of the economic crisis might be a lowered standard of living, but lacked the courage of conviction necessary to curtail debate and to strike out boldly on a planned economy of recovery. No such compunctions deterred Communists, Fascists, or Nazis from offering to their masses future utopias in return for present sacrifices of adequate food, physical comfort, and personal freedom. Inevitably, however, as a result of their willingness to cut loose from the past, the European radicals for the time being forged ahead of those who attempted to retain something of the older liberalism.

These generalizations do not apply with equal force to all countries. In Great Britain, the outcome of the political crisis which was caused in August 1931 by the financial strain, was a

characteristic compromise. The supplanting of the Labor Government by a national coalition in which the Conservatives came to hold a dominating position meant that the political trend was the opposite from radical. Nevertheless a predominantly Conservative Government made at least two revolutionary changes in British policy in that it abandoned the gold standard in September 1931 and thus was able to undersell its rivals on the world market, and it adopted a policy of protection through a series of measures beginning in November 1931. The abandonment of free trade was accompanied by an effort to develop an all-British market at the Ottawa Conference of July and August 1932. At the same time Great Britain demonstrated her conservative character by retaining her parliamentary form of government at home and by insisting abroad upon the sanctity of contracts and the development of world trade through international cooperation, even though by her own radical measures she had dealt a blow to both.

A somewhat similar compromise developed in the United States as a result of the Democratic election victory of November 1932 which turned out the 'prosperity-just-around-the-corner' régime and replaced it in March 1933 with a President and a group of men who horrified the conservatives and disappointed the radicals. They dared to take certain drastic steps, such as abandonment of the gold standard and a great expansion of the Government's control over the economic life of the nation (for the most part, by measures which had been adopted in England and Europe twenty-five to fifty years before), but refused to go as far as the radicals desired.

The crisis in Germany, beginning in 1931, reached its climax in March 1933 when the Nazis were assured of power. Long before that date, however, the democratic machinery of the Weimar Republic had broken down and had given way to a semi-dictatorship, at first of moderate and then of more and more extreme elements. The outcome was the Nazi revolution of 1933 which offered a radical solution of the political and economic crisis, and profoundly influenced the whole course of international events.<sup>7</sup>

Italy — a poor country and one hard hit by the war and the first post-war depression — began its slow transformation into a totalitarian state with the Fascist March on Rome in 1922. Four years later the blue-prints of a future 'corporate state' were is-

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 2 for further discussion of National Socialism in Germany.

sued in the Charter of Labor and other decrees. But the great depression accelerated the development of a new political and economic régime which was finally completely created in March 1939 when the Chamber of Deputies was replaced by that of the Fascios and Corporations. Meanwhile, like Nazism in Germany, Fascism in Italy had become a powerful factor in destroying the European peace structure and contributing to the outbreak of the Second World War.

France, because she was economically more self-sufficient than the other European countries, did not feel the full effects of the depression until 1932-33. Production in France remained at a relatively high level through 1931, when the index for production (1928 = 100) registered 97.6 compared with 88.4 for Great Britain.<sup>8</sup> The political crisis resulting from the consequences of the depression after it did reach France came in February 1934 when recovery had already begun elsewhere. At first France tended to swing to the Right, following somewhat the English pattern, and then she swung to the Left and attempted a 'New Deal' very similar to that in the United States. The significant thing was that France, by the very timing of her depression and the political instability that went with it, was at a disadvantage in international affairs not only with respect to her opponents but also her friends, all of whom had set their feet on their chosen course of recovery and stability when France was politically unstable and weak.

Both Soviet Russia and Japan scarcely experienced the depression in the same way that the United States and Western Europe had, because they were both in the midst of a period of industrialization which required all the energies they could muster and so caused an increase rather than a decrease of employment. Nevertheless both were severely shaken by events. Japan's expansion at the expense of China which began in 1931 was made to appear more urgent, if not justified, by deteriorating world economic conditions. The U.S.S.R. was especially affected by the financial crisis which caused the sources of capital upon which she had counted to dry up. The sacrifices entailed in the readjustment of her economy to a changed world situation may well be one explanation for the tremendous internal upheaval manifested in the Moscow trials and the purges of 1935-38. At the same time, the Soviet Russian experiment in planned economy became the subject of world-wide attention.

<sup>8</sup> League of Nations, *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*, January 1934, p. 17.

Reactionaries and conservatives, fearful of the spread of socialism and economic reform, emphasized the attendant brutality of the Five-Year Plans. Liberals, tending to overlook the despotic aspects of the Moscow régime, hailed the apparent success of the Soviet in building up its economy, and called for the adoption of modified Five-Year Plans in their own countries. As the economic crisis spread and grew worse, the reactionary groups in a number of European countries supported and promoted Fascist and Nazi movements with their demagogic nationalism and state capitalism. Thus the internal economic policies of the U.S.S.R. were of great significance for politics in other lands.

The pattern of political crisis in the smaller states of Europe followed that of England and France in the case of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands, Spain, and Scandinavia, or that of the Fascist régimes in Austria, Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, Rumania, and Greece. Nowhere did Communist parties succeed in winning a single victory, though their tactics helped to establish Fascism in such states as Germany and Austria. In all instances, however, the outcome of political and social unrest and instability was determined, not by the nature of the economic crisis, but rather by the traditions and by the trend of historical development in each country. In those countries where democratic ideals and practices had become firmly rooted through generations of trial and error, conflict and compromise, passions never rose to the point where the method of deciding issues by counting heads was given up, however much radicals might advocate more direct action. On the other hand, where the tradition of autocratic or aristocratic rule was strong, where the masses, but lately enfranchised, were ignorant, or were inexperienced in political debate, the breaking of heads quite naturally became the way to decide issues. After all it is the quickest and, from a short-run point of view, the most effective method. Hungry people do not stop to consider the long-run course. They act instinctively.

Much the same situation existed in international affairs, although here ruthlessness and disregard of the other fellow had always been the respectable practice as long as the rules of the game were observed. Thus there developed in 1931-33 a scramble for economic advantage, motivated by the spirit of 'each for himself.' This seems to be a human tendency in periods of panic which civilization has done little to overcome. When even in the United States, cities, counties, and states tried to get

people to 'buy at home,' it is little wonder that European countries became ever more nationalistic in their economic policies as the crisis deepened. Here again those who were willing to cut the Gordian knot of former treaties and commitments seemed to come out best while those who clung to tradition and contracts became helpless debaters at international conferences.

Under the impact of the chaotic economic conditions and the rising radical parties, the position of the *status-quo* Powers began to weaken, although they held their own fairly well up to the opening of 1932. Thereafter the issue was no longer *status quo* or revision, but rather, how much revision? And particularly, by what means? This latter question was significant because its very existence represented a fundamental change in European attitude toward the peace settlement. After 1931 it was recognized that mere patching would not suffice, but that the whole peace structure had to be rebuilt. The economic crisis had helped, in other words, to bring the 'haves' face to face with the 'have nots' in a test of strength which until 1936 was carried on according to the rules of the boxing ring of pre-1914, revised a little and brought up to date by the League of Nations and other institutions set up by the victors of 1918. After 1936 the gloves and the rules were off, though the statesmen of the 'haves,' who were for the most part of the pre-1914 generation, failed to realize that their world order, at least for the time being, had cracked up. The methods of the day were those of the upstarts like Stalin, Mussolini, and Hitler, who had already begun before 1914 to revolt against the settled order of things when their opponents were wearing school ties and upholding in the counting house, the press, and on the platform the liberty, equality, and fraternity of the established order.

#### *4. Bankruptcy: the End of Reparations, 1931-32*

To return to the events of 1931, the failure of the Kredit-Anstalt Bank in Austria on May 11 did not immediately deflect statesmen from their politico-economic squabbles. France, who had been busily lending money to her friends in Eastern Europe — Rumania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia — during March and April, proposed, at the meeting of the Commission on European Union which opened on May 15, a rather complicated scheme of international cartels and credits which were designed to help the weak Danubian states and to institute a

degree of control over industrial production and distribution. This was her reply to the Austro-German customs union, postponement of which until the World Court could pass upon its legality was much resented in Germany. There the people were more acutely aware of the critical state of affairs than were the French, who were obviously using their relatively strong financial position to maintain and even strengthen their political hegemony on the Continent.

Such considerations did not affect President Hoover in the United States. Although his attempts to check economic decline in his own country were rather weak and ineffective, he recognized that drastic measures must be adopted to cope with the financial crisis in Europe, and accordingly created an international sensation when he unexpectedly and without much diplomatic preparation proposed on June 20 a one-year moratorium of all intergovernmental debts (war debts and reparations) as a means of easing the international financial strain. His suggestion temporarily checked the panic that was sweeping Germany, but was very coldly received in France whose national pride was injured because she had not been consulted and because the French feared that such a moratorium would be the opening wedge for revision of the reparations settlement. The good effects which prompt action might have had were largely lost as a result of French intransigence, and action upon Hoover's plan was delayed until July 6.

The desperate German position was further indicated on July 3 by the bankruptcy of the North German Wool Combing Corporation (the Nordwolle) and a week later by the failure of Dr. Hans Luther, President of the Reichsbank, to obtain a long-term credit in London or Paris. London claimed inability to lend any money and Paris would only do so on condition that Germany promise not to attempt the creation of an Austro-German customs union — a condition which no loyal German could accept at this time. On July 12, the Banque de Genève, an important Central European bank, announced its insolvency. On July 13, the Bank for International Settlements declared that it would support German credit, but on the same day the Danat Bank — Darmstädter und Nationalbank, one of Germany's Big Four — failed. An immediate run on all German banks started. The German Government promptly closed all private banks for two days, guaranteed the Danat losses, and closed the stock exchanges. Meanwhile, since the gold cover of the German note

issue had fallen to 35 per cent (legal minimum: 40 per cent), the Reichsbank raised the discount rate from 7 per cent to 10 per cent. Other drastic decrees were issued by the Government, the general effect of which was to give the Government almost complete control over foreign exchange and, indeed, over the whole economic life of the German people.

On July 20 came an abortive conference at London whose purpose was to determine how the financial crisis in Germany might be dealt with. At the conference were the Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. Also present were representatives of the United States, Italy, and Belgium, together with experts of each country. The urgent German need was for long-term credit. Once again England pleaded her inability to extend aid on the grounds of her own economic situation. The United States, whose people had lost much already in Germany and elsewhere, was mainly interested in saving what was left. The French were willing to extend the credit, but only on the condition that Germany secure the loan through her customs receipts and also promise that there would be no demand for treaty revisions for ten years, the life of the proposed loan. Britain and the United States refused to press these demands on Germany. After three days, the conference broke up without coming to an agreement. The German representatives returned to Berlin convinced that they could expect no outside aid, that salvation must be sought in a régime of self-sufficiency. Germany could not sell because other countries would not buy; she could not import because by so doing she was losing what little gold she had. And no country was willing to extend her the credit necessary for a resumption of normal economic activity without political conditions regarded by the German people and particularly by the extremists as dishonorable.

At about this time, England experienced a sharp withdrawal of funds by foreigners, a movement that was accelerated by rumors of trouble in the British Navy over pay cuts. On September 21, the National Government, formed a month before, suspended operation of the gold standard. This British action was copied in quick succession by Norway, Sweden, Greece, Egypt, Finland, and other countries. By December 31, 1931, sterling exchange had fallen to \$3.23 (normal: \$4.86). This fall in the pound, the equivalent of a price cut as far as English exports were concerned, and for the time being a stimulus to British foreign sales, led to restrictions by other countries against



'cheap' English goods. Thus did the economic absurdities continue and grow worse even as, realizing dimly their mistakes, statesmen tried to procure release from the economic strait-jacket into which they had placed themselves as a result of their own economically unsound acts.

In contrast to England, France was enjoying a superior financial and economic position. This enabled her to exercise a hegemony in Europe such as she had not enjoyed since the days of Napoleon III when she had seemed for a time to be the arbiter of the Continent. By her loans in the early months of 1931 she had reinsured herself against the possible defection of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia. Largely as a result of financial pressure she had compelled Austria and Germany to give up the customs union. Hungary, one of the most intransigent revisionist states that had seemed to hook her wagon to the rising star of Fascist Italy in 1927, was apparently compelled to sell revision short in order to get loans from Paris in 1931. For a time it seemed as if Premier Laval on his trip to Washington in October would succeed, not only in getting American support for his contention that the Young Plan should be put back into force at the expiration of the moratorium, but also in persuading the United States to modify its attitude on war debts. One thing which France and Europe had been trying to obtain for years was recognition by the United States that there was an economic and legal connection between reparations and war debts and that the one should be reduced *pari-passu* with the other. It was not the fault of M. Laval nor the French policy that the American Congress failed to appreciate his arguments. But Congress was not Europe, and in Europe French predominance seemed unchallenged.

Appearances, however, were deceptive, for the forces opposed to French hegemony and to the maintenance of the *status quo* were gathering momentum. The depression, with its inexorable consequences to the European structure of international obligations, was becoming more and more serious as 1931 turned into 1932. Germany's distress, which also increased rather than diminished, was a fact attested by more than one committee of experts whose opinions could not be disputed. While Germany had yielded to French pressure in the case of the customs union with Austria, the Government had avoided the further political commitment, demanded by France, that she give up any agitation for treaty revision during the next ten years. Indeed, hard

economic necessity, political pressure from the Nazi and Nationalist parties, and the encouragement afforded by the views of other revisionists, such as Italy, emboldened the German Government in 1931 finally to abandon the policy of fulfillment which had been pursued since 1925 and to strike out upon a course of revision which prepared the way for the successes of the Nazi régime of later years.

After the Bank of International Settlements recognized the justice of Germany's case for reconsideration of her debts and set up in November 1931 a Special Advisory Committee whose task was to make a full investigation of Germany's position, even the French Government declared that it could not refuse to examine a scheme for a new arrangement with its debtors. Premier Laval insisted, however, that any new plan must be limited to the duration of the depression and that France would accept a reduction of payments only in proportion to reductions granted by her creditors. This position, though it represented with respect to reparations a considerable shift from that a few months or even weeks earlier, was to prove untenable as events outstripped intentions.

Taking for his cue the report of the Special Advisory Committee (or 'Basle experts') to the effect that all reparations and war debts should be adjusted without delay 'to the existing troubled situation of the world,' Chancellor Brüning of Germany decided upon the bold step of declaring on January 9, 1932, that Germany could no longer pay and that, therefore, there was only one obvious policy she could adopt. While the language of diplomacy and likewise the temperament of the Chancellor did not permit greater bluntness, Brüning had actually declared that Germany not only could not but would not pay any more reparations. The significance of this declaration lay in the fact that, a year before Hitler came into power, the German Government had embarked upon a policy of revision and had adopted a method which was different only in degree and not in kind from the blunt, unilateral denunciation of treaty obligations later employed by the Nazi régime.

The sequel showed that Brüning and not Laval was right about reparations. Italy rushed to the support of Germany when, by means of unsigned newspaper articles, Mussolini advised the other German creditors and also the United States to make a clean slate of reparations and war debts. Further political changes in both Germany and France helped also to de-

terminate the outcome of the Lausanne Conference when it finally met on June 16. Von Papen's replacement of Bruening at the end of May had indicated the rising influence of the intransigent elements in Germany. The Tardieu-Laval régime of the Right in France had given way, as a result of the elections on May 1 and 8, to that of Herriot and the less intransigent Radical Socialists who gave promise of a more compliant attitude than that taken by France in 1931.

The Powers came together at Lausanne in order to agree on a lasting settlement of the long-term loans to Germany and reparations, and on the measures necessary to solve the other economic and financial difficulties involved in the world crisis. Despite the greater willingness of France to make compromises, the proceedings at the Lausanne Conference were characterized by friction among Great Britain, France, and Germany, though of a somewhat milder nature than formerly. Great Britain insisted that the German reparations problem had to be solved as a preliminary to any real recovery of world trade. However, since Great Britain was a creditor nation, she did not want to set the bad precedent of total default. Germany, in turn, produced the report of the Basle experts to show that she could not make any but very nominal reparation payments. The German representatives stated that Germany was willing and anxious to contribute to world economic reconstruction; but they demanded the complete cancellation of a portion of the Versailles Treaty — the famous 'war guilt' and reparations clauses. Von Papen pointed to the Nazi threat in Germany if these concessions were not granted and if some efforts were not made to meet the growing internal German demand, under Nazi stimulus, for German equality with other Powers.

Although France did not look with favor upon concessions to the German Republic, Premier Herriot adopted a conciliatory tone. In phrases quite different from those of Tardieu and Laval, he declared in his final speech: 'We French, gravely concerned with the affairs of our own country, have listened with emotion to the story of the sufferings of the German people with whom we wish to have cordial relations.'

The Lausanne Conference agreed to cancel all further reparations on the payment by Germany of a final sum of \$714,286,000 and this seemed to end the whole question. Unfortunately for the good effect which this virtual acceptance of the German demand might have had, a rumor quickly spread abroad that,

according to an agreement among Germany's creditors, the Lausanne Protocol embodying this scheme was not to be ratified unless and until they had arrived at satisfactory settlements of their own war debts to the United States. Needless to say, opinion in the United States, never too favorable to reduction or cancellation of the war debts, was outraged by this bit of double-dealing. Actually, Germany never did pay any more in reparations. And after the Hoover Moratorium only token payments on war debts were made to the United States, but these were few in number and small in amount.

With reference to the broader question of the causes and cure of the depression, the Lausanne Conference recommended that the League of Nations should be invited to convene a World Economic Conference. Accordingly a committee of experts was appointed to prepare the agenda. Another conference, in September 1932, at Stresa, undertook to deal with the commercial and financial restrictions in Central Europe, and to try to solve the problem of low prices of cereals upon whose export the Central European countries depended for their existence. As was the habit with such conferences, nothing was accomplished.

The year 1932 drew to a close in a pall of gloom. Some economists now argue that the turning-point of the crisis was reached in the summer of 1932, and that the subsequent monetary panic in the United States was due to conditions peculiar to that country. Nevertheless, at the time, any recovery that had been made was relatively insignificant and only in Germany was it fairly clear that great changes were brewing. Before examining events in Germany, however, there remains the topic of disarmament, another factor contributing to the dark situation which existed at the close of 1932.

### *5. Disarmament Conference, 1932*

While economic affairs occupied the center of the stage in 1931, the question of disarmament and all the attendant problems of security and revision came to the fore in 1932. There was, to be sure, a certain economic element involved in these matters, for the depression had raised the question of 'guns or butter,' to use a phrase coined a few years later. This aspect of the problem had been stressed by President Hoover in 1931 when, addressing the International Chamber of Commerce on May 4, he linked recovery with such a reduction of armaments as

would result in lowering the tax burdens of the world and thus, by helping to remove a cause of unrest, would establish greater confidence in the future.

That there was some reason for this point of view seemed to be supported by Hoover's own statement that expenditure on armaments had increased 70 per cent since before the World War, and he would have been among the first to class such expense under the head of 'boondoggling,' however much it might help to keep people employed. It is very difficult to give any comparative estimate of the size of armies, navies, and armaments because of the variables in the value of money and of equipment, and in the character of training and of auxiliary or reserve forces, but it has been estimated that while there was probably a decrease in some of the world's largest armies — by compulsion in the case of Germany and by choice in that of France, to give two examples — actually the world had a larger quantity of armament in 1930 than in 1913. More significant was the fact that the world was spending almost a billion dollars more on arms in 1930 than in 1925 even though costs were lower. This represented, therefore, a considerable increase even during the most peaceful and hopeful years of the post-war era.

But Europe was not so much inclined to see the problem in terms of economics as in those of politics. At bottom the issue was: How can peace and security best be maintained? Collectively or by national forces? A little nearer the surface this issue often appeared under the guise of revision or *status quo*; that is, should Germany, and the other defeated Powers who had been compelled to accept limitations on their armament, be granted equality by disarming everyone else; or should the inequalities existing after the World War be maintained even though the superiority of the armed Powers were reduced somewhat?

The close association of the two unsolved problems of security and disarmament had existed since 1919. The Covenant of the League of Nations had clearly declared that the 'maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations' (Art. 8). What was safe, and could 'common action' be depended upon to enforce international obligations? That was the rub! France had consistently taken the view that some system of security must precede disarmament. On the other hand, Germany, quite naturally in view of her own state of insecurity as a result of

disarmament, insisted that there was no security without disarmament of others, at least down to her own level.

But a satisfactory and reliable system of collective security was incompatible with the concept of national sovereignty. As long as every system of security was dependent in the last analysis upon the will of each individual member whose interests were still in the traditional manner regarded as the sole valid criteria of action, there could be no complete confidence in it. Nevertheless, Europe (and the world) tried to guarantee peace and security by an impressive number of pacts and treaties in addition to the Covenant of the League.

The reason for the additions, aside from the newness and lack of experience of the League structure, can be reduced to two. One was that the system of security under the League was devised for a universal world membership and from the very beginning two of the greatest world Powers were not members — the United States and Soviet Russia. A major conflict could hardly arise in Europe or elsewhere in which the attitude of one or both of these Powers would not be important and perhaps decisive, particularly since one was a great sea Power and the other potentially a great land Power of both Europe and Asia. Under the circumstances no punishment of any member of the League for aggression could be contemplated without knowing what the attitude of the two great nations would be.

The other factor was the so-called 'gap' in the Covenant. The members of the League were bound to respect and preserve one another's territorial integrity and political independence (Art. 10), and to consider any war or threat of war 'a matter of concern to the whole League' about which the League should take action (Art. 11). Members of the League were obliged to submit disputes likely to lead to a rupture to arbitration, or judicial settlement, or to inquiry by the Council (Art. 12). In the last case the Council was to attempt a settlement, but if the Council failed to reach a *unanimous* decision, then 'the members of the League reserve to themselves the right to take such action as they shall consider necessary for the maintenance of right and justice' (Art. 15). There was the 'gap,' for it does not require much imagination to see that it is precisely the most dangerous conflicts involving national pride and prestige that cannot be settled by arbitration nor by judicial bodies like the World Court, and that just such cases are the least likely to be viewed with unanimity by twelve or fourteen states on the League Council.

With respect to the earlier attempts to fill this gap it need only be said that from the beginning the French alliance system or the regional guarantees of peace like those of the Locarno Pacts of 1925 were more easily effected and put into operation than projects of collective security such as the abortive Treaty of Mutual Assistance and the Geneva Protocol. This was true, not merely because the former methods of guaranteeing security were more in line with the traditions of power politics, but because the obligations incurred in bilateral agreements or even in multilateral accords which were limited to one area were more precise and more restricted, and the sanctions exerted as a result of national interests were considered to be more effective than any which were dependent upon loyalty to a vague and ill-formed world community.

Beginning with the Kellogg-Briand or Paris Pact of 1928, however, there seemed to be some hope of solving both difficulties with the League by means of some kind of collective action. By that pact, both the United States and Soviet Russia, as well as the members of the League of Nations, solemnly declared 'that they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies and renounce it as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another.' At the same time the Soviet Union seemed to prove her peaceful intent by a remarkable series of non-aggression pacts of various kinds with her neighbors. Furthermore, there was hope, strengthened by the position taken in the Far Eastern crises of 1929 and 1931, that the United States might eventually join in a collective security system by the logical process of 'implementing' the Kellogg Pact, even though there was little likelihood that she might be drawn into the League.

A month after the Kellogg-Briand Pact was signed, the League Assembly approved the 'General Act for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes' by which the signatories were bound to accept the decision of the Permanent Court of International Justice (World Court) in justiciable disputes, an obligation already taken by many through signature of the Optional Clause, and to accept the decision of an arbitral tribunal in non-justiciable disputes if other methods of conciliation and arbitration, provided for in the Act, had failed. Up to 1931, none of the Great Powers had signed this Act, but in that year, in preparation for the Disarmament Conference, both Great Britain and France did so, although with reservations which greatly weakened if they

did not nullify the effectiveness of the Act. Indeed, it was clear that the French Government and parliament approved the Act in large part because they interpreted it as another means of maintaining the treaties. Thus the French signature did not represent a very peaceful measure in view of the mounting demand for revision.

Since the method of meeting such situations by concocting another pact had become a quite firmly fixed habit, ludicrous had it not been so tragic, the League made one more effort, and this time brought forth the 'General Convention to Improve the Means of Preventing War' which was approved by the Assembly in September 1931. This convention had its origin in a German suggestion of 1928 that had been further promoted by Great Britain in 1929. As finally drafted, it provided for a little more effective working of the Council in cases of dispute and a more automatic method of determining the aggressor than was the case in Articles 15 and 16 of the Covenant. But as usual the smaller and least aggressive states like Belgium, the Netherlands, the Scandinavian nations, Spain, Austria, Greece, and Lithuania signed it immediately and among the Great Powers only Germany had agreed to it before the end of 1931, although France had promised to do so.

This multiplicity of pacts and promises fooled no one but the blind. They rather emphasized that the problem of security had not been solved. Since this was so, that of disarmament was likewise almost as far from settlement as ever even though a Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference had been working for years and had at last in 1930 produced a draft treaty which was to be filled in and finally agreed upon at a world conference. But the divergent points of view among the Powers had not at all been reconciled as the pronouncements of 1931 indicated. Nevertheless plans for the Disarmament Conference were completed when the League Council in 1931 set Geneva, February 2, 1932, as the place and date of meeting and chose for President of the Conference Arthur Henderson, Secretary for Foreign Affairs in the British Labor Government, but out of office and even out of Parliament when the Conference met.

A round of rather ominous pronouncements and events, in addition to the economic catastrophes already discussed, accompanied or followed these decisions. Russia started off by declaring in a note of January 12, 1931, that the success of dis-



armament, which she considered to be the sole guarantee of peace, 'requires the unqualified admission of the principle of complete equality of status to each participator in the Conference, whether a great or a small Power.' Thus Russia squarely aligned herself with Germany whose demand for equality, backed by German public opinion representative of all parties from Left to Right, was reiterated by civilians and military men in 1931. Along with the insistence upon equality, spokesmen of Germany also emphasized what they considered to be the legal obligation of the other Powers to disarm, since in the Treaty of Versailles and correspondence with the German delegation it had been stated that the reduction of German armament was the first step toward general disarmament. Even more significant perhaps than speeches was the launching of the new pocket battleship, *Deutschland*, on May 19, because it not only aroused the fear of France but also helped undoubtedly to make impossible a Franco-Italian naval agreement along the lines of the London Treaty of 1930.

French statesmen in the meantime were not slow to take up the cudgels in defense of their own point of view. President Doumergue declared in a speech of April 9 that 'so long as the League of Nations — to whose existence France is so faithfully attached — does not have at its disposition a military force sufficient to impose its decisions upon those who would not be willing to accept them voluntarily, France must keep awake, stay on guard and count largely upon herself. . . . A country like ours, which has been taught by bitter experiences the cruel surprises to which it may be exposed, must not, so long as no powerful international force has been set on foot, allow itself to reduce its own forces below the level demanded by the needs of the security and integrity of the mother country and the colonies for which the present generations are accountable to those of the future.' In other words, no reduction and no equality were possible until France was secured from invasion by international forces.

This familiar French thesis was elaborated in a state paper issued on July 15 and published a few days later, and by a speech of War Minister Maginot on July 27. There was no doubt that far from tending to give way, the French view of security and disarmament was hardening.

The one ray of hope among the continental Great Powers was that offered by the attitude of Italy. This seems strange when it is

recalled that upon many occasions Mussolini had been one of the greatest of sword-rattlers, and in 1930 had spoken more than once in the vein of his Florence speech of May 17 when he said that 'words are very fine things, but muskets, machine guns, ships, airplanes and guns are even better; because right, if unaccompanied by might, is a vain word.' After mentioning the program of naval building, he continued: 'I am sure the Italian people, rather than remain prisoners in a sea which once belonged to Rome, will be capable of even the greatest sacrifices.' On the other hand, his Foreign Minister, Grandi, had always managed to neutralize the effect of such utterances by conciliatory words or deeds. To be sure, he had not been able to complete the drafting of a naval agreement with France, the principles of which had been accepted by March 1, 1931. That was not the fault of Italy, however, which was plainly supporting disarmament in that year. At the League Assembly in September, it was Grandi who proposed a truce in all armament building, at least for the period of the Disarmament Conference, as a result of which the Assembly passed a resolution inviting all participants to refrain from increasing their armaments for one year from November 1, 1931.

The British attitude toward disarmament was not clearly expressed in 1931 except through the activities of Henderson in trying to bring about the Franco-Italian naval agreement and to pour oil on troubled waters wherever possible. It is interesting to note, however, that in some quarters in England and especially on the Conservative side of Parliament there was still a good deal of isolationism and a desire to keep free of continental conflicts. This attitude could not hearten those, particularly the French, who wanted a system of collective security. No less a person than Winston Churchill, in a House of Commons debate over the appropriation for the air force, hoped and trusted that 'the French will look after their own safety and that we shall be permitted to live in our island without being again drawn into the perils of the Continent of Europe.' This view, expressed a year before Hitler came into power in Germany and at least three years before the cry of Democracy versus Fascism was raised as a lure to action in Spain and elsewhere, is highly significant for an understanding of British policy. For the immediate question of the Disarmament Conference, it helps to explain why Great Britain tried to balance between the French thesis of security and the German demand for equality.

As it turned out, though the sequel was only dimly perceived at the time, the most shattering blow to the system of collective security built around the League, the Locarno Pacts, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the Nine-Power Treaty, and similar regional and general pacts, was the attack upon China which was begun by Japan when she seized Mukden during September 1931, at the very time Grandi's proposal of an arms truce was being debated in Geneva. When the Disarmament Conference opened on February 2, 1932, Japanese forces were fighting in Shanghai and their ships had bombarded Nanking. The significance of Japanese activity lay in that it revealed the inadequacy of the mountain of treaties and pacts to stop a hungry nation from marching against a weaker neighbor. The subsequent failure of the peace machinery in punishing Japan laid bare the fact that ruthless force was mightier than the hundreds of words in praise of peace and security, which had been poured forth at Geneva since 1920 and whose flow was augmented when the Disarmament Conference met.

Yet public opinion all over the world was in favor of disarmament, demanding with an emotional fervor not equaled since the time of the World War that the Conference accomplish something. The trouble was, however, that the millions of signers of petitions to the Disarmament Conference were too frequently willing to rely upon the mere weight of paper and ink to fulfill their wishes. For example, signatures of over two million British subjects were not to be lightly overlooked, but still British politicians were probably correct in acting on the hypothesis that very few of those signers would vote for a man who agreed to scrap the whole British Navy or to put it under the command of some American, French, Italian, German, or Japanese admiral as part of an international police force. In other words, the public opinion that was expressed in favor of disarmament was too often unthinking and unintelligent, and when not that, was too easily persuaded by national feeling to say 'No' to every proposition that seemed to involve sacrifice of national sovereignty or national interests. Again in politics as in economics the short-run course was far easier to take than the long-run, and in 1932 the substitution of some form of international force for national forces was decidedly a long-run proposal.

It is unnecessary here to recount the story of the Conference in detail. The first few days were taken up with presentation of proposals by the various Great Powers, and of petitions by represent-

atives of women's clubs, students, churches, labor, and League of Nations societies. Numerous commissions and sub-committees were set up to work out details while Foreign Ministers and other delegates tried to settle principles and methods behind the scenes. In view of the fact that every spokesman in the opening days of the Conference adhered to the attitude which his country had already made familiar in some five years of discussion, the principal task still remained that of fitting the square pegs of national interest and national sovereignty into the round hole of international cooperation and organization.

The tempo at which the Conference moved was much slowed down because of unstable political conditions in those two key nations of France and Germany, and because of interruptions occasioned by the Far Eastern crisis. Between the fall of Laval's Government on February 16 and the return of Tardieu as Premier on the twenty-fourth, the leading French delegate was absent from Geneva. After the French elections of May 1 and 8 which represented a swing toward the Left in France, there was much delay before Herriot became head of the newly formed Radical Socialist Government on June 4. The presidential elections in Germany, requiring two ballots, March 13 and April 10, before Hindenburg came out the winner over Hitler, were disturbing, although the result was welcomed at Geneva. On the other hand, Bruening resigned on May 30 and was succeeded on June 2 by von Papen and his Junker Cabinet which rather strengthened the German determination either to win equality in armament or quit the Conference. Special meetings of the League Council and one of the Assembly kept many statesmen who were members of the Disarmament Conference preoccupied with the Japanese-Chinese conflict, and in June and July much time was consumed by the heads of European states and their Foreign Ministers at the Conference of Lausanne.

The meager achievements of the Conference up to July were summarized in a resolution which was finally passed on July 23 with eight abstentions and two negative votes. The Russian delegate explained that his nay vote was cast because the resolution did not represent a decisive step toward disarmament. Indeed, a glance at the resolution would seem to bear him out, for after a general introduction reaffirming the determination of the Conference to effect a reduction in armaments, the record of agreement still read like intention rather than accomplishment. Air attacks upon civilians, and the use of chemical, bacteriological,

and incendiary warfare were to be prohibited, artillery and tanks were to be limited in size, and a Permanent Disarmament Commission was to be set up in accordance with Part VI of the Draft Convention in order to exercise some supervision over the application of any disarmament provisions that might be eventually agreed upon. The actual regulation and limitation of aircraft, the actual size of artillery and tanks, in short, the question of how much rather than how had not been settled and the Conference was still bogged down in generalities.

Even more significant was the other negative vote which was Germany's, for her delegate explained not only that Germany had voted 'No' because the German demand for equality had not been recognized, but also that Germany would not collaborate further in the Conference until she was granted equality of rights with the other Powers. Thus the Conference was forced to face the issue which all along had been one of the principal obstacles to agreement. If Germany were to be granted equality with France, how was France to be guaranteed her security? The remainder of the year was taken up with this problem which was handled in negotiations among the Great Powers rather than as a general conference matter.

By the summer of 1932, the atmosphere of suspicion and fear had rather increased than diminished since the previous year. There were constant rumors that Germany was covertly arming and that the French Government would publish its 'secret dossier' on this matter to which both Tardieu and Herriot actually referred, though it was not made public by either one. Furthermore, the French were beginning to worry about the reduction in their man-power as a result of the lowered birth rate during the war. They estimated that for the five-year period beginning in 1933 there would be an annual shortage of 120,000 men of military age. On the other hand, in the parliamentary debates on the budget toward the end of July 1932, it was revealed that the eastern frontier fortifications — the 'Maginot line' — gave France complete security in that region. The Germans were quick to take advantage of this admission and General von Schleicher in a broadcast pointed out that the attitude of the French delegation at the Disarmament Conference, with its insistence upon some form of international security, was scarcely compatible with such a statement. He referred to the likelihood of other nations disarming down to Germany's level as a 'miracle' and indicated that if 'full security and equality of rights' were not

granted to Germany she would reorganize her forces so as to give Germany security, although he claimed that she would not need to increase them in size. In September the German Government announced its abstention from the Conference until absolute equality was granted.

Italy, where rather extensive cabinet changes had occurred on July 20 as a result of which Grandi was replaced at the Conference by Balbo, came out in support of Germany. Both Balbo and Mussolini, in signed newspaper articles, attacked the Conference and the League of Nations. Mussolini, returning to his 1930 mood, extolled war and declared that Fascists did not believe either in the possibility or the advantages of peace. This attitude set many rumors afloat and especially gave credence to the idea that Germany and Italy might ally and together withdraw from the League of Nations. Mussolini, however, dispelled these fears and contributed to a settlement of the Franco-German differences when in a speech at Turin, October 23, he denied that Italy intended to leave the League and at the same time declared that Germany should not ask for the right to rearm as long as the Disarmament Conference remained in session. He suggested that the four Western European Powers should collaborate in bringing about a period of political tranquillity which might also contribute to a solution of economic difficulties. Since the French Government regarded this speech as an olive branch, it contributed to better feeling and a diminution in tension of indirect value in dealing with the German demand for equality even if it did not help very much to solve the still remaining problem of Franco-Italian naval rivalry.

Undoubtedly American diplomacy in the person of Norman Davis had helped to bring Mussolini round to the point of view represented by his Turin speech. In another way the United States had also contributed to a better atmosphere in Europe. While insisting that the United States would take no direct part in the question of German equality nor in that of French security, Secretary Stimson was well aware of the relation of American isolation to the European problem. Furthermore, the Sino-Japanese crisis had brought home to the American Government the inadequacy of paper pacts and single-handed action in international crises. Accordingly on August 8, 1932, Stimson made a very important statement in which he declared that it was incumbent upon the signers of the Kellogg-Briand Pact to consult in times of crisis in order to make more effective the sanction of

world public opinion upon which the Pact rested. Even though he expressly refused to consider any other form of 'implementation,' Secretary Stimson's clear and emphatic endorsement of consultation was enough to hearten the French and particularly to make the British Government feel easier over the American attitude should England be called upon to place her sea power at the service of collective security.

The British attitude throughout the Conference had been that of attempting to find a compromise between the German and the French conflicting views. The French had felt certain for a time that Great Britain had been won over to a new *Entente Cordiale* when on July 13 at the close of the Lausanne Conference the two Powers had signed an accord by which they agreed to 'exchange views with one another with complete candour' concerning European problems and particularly to work together regarding disarmament and the World Economic Conference. French enthusiasm was dampened when any special meaning the accord might have had was destroyed by the adherence to it of every other European Power except Soviet Russia and Turkey. Their hopes rose again when the British Government issued a note on September 18 repudiating the German claim that there was any legal right by which the Conference could abrogate the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles or by which Germany could do so, should the Disarmament Conference fail. Nevertheless the British Government was anxious to find a formula by which Germany could be brought back to the Conference. All their efforts proved abortive until after the explicit recognition by Sir John Simon, British Secretary of Foreign Affairs, in a speech in the House of Commons on November 10 of Germany's claim to equality.

Meanwhile the French had worked out a new plan for disarmament which, while it retained the characteristic features of a scheme for collective security and for an international police force under international control, at the same time showed evidence of a desire to meet some of the British, American, and even German points of view. No doubt in view of this plan and the British attitude, an agreement with Germany could have been made in November but for the political crisis which resulted in the overthrow of von Papen and the eventual assumption of the chancellorship by von Schleicher on December 2. At last conversations were begun at Geneva on December 6 among the representatives of Germany, France, Great Britain,

Italy, and the United States. The result, after five days of difficult negotiations, was the agreement of December 11 by which the five Powers declared 'that one of the principles that should guide the Conference on disarmament should be to grant to Germany, and to the other Powers disarmed by treaty, equality of rights in a system which would provide security for all nations, and that the principle should itself be embodied in a convention containing the conclusions of the Disarmament Conference.' Germany agreed to come back to the Conference; the four European Powers reaffirmed their intention not to attempt to resolve any present or future differences between the signatories by resort to force; and all five reasserted their determination to cooperate in the Conference and bring about a reduction and limitation of armaments.

This resolution was possible because it satisfied both the German claim for a recognition of the right to equality and the French insistence that there must be a system of security. The declaration had no more practical meaning, therefore, than that it enabled Germany to return to the Conference. All the fundamental problems of how to get security and how much to reduce armaments remained unsolved. The General Commission of the Conference met on December 14 with the German delegate present and adjourned until January 31, 1933, which, as it turned out, was one day after Hitler became Chancellor of the German Reich. This eventuality, which helped to influence the future course of the Disarmament Conference to a certain extent and the international relations of Europe still more, was not foreseen at Geneva where it was believed in December that the Schleicher Government would remain in power for a long time.

Thus the year 1932 came to a close with the question of reparations and war debts in a 'state of suspended animation' and the question of disarmament 'being buried alive in the pigeon-holes of the expert commissions.'<sup>9</sup> Hope, however, was by no means dead in the Europe which was turning from 1932 into 1933. It had been expressed in an American periodical by the great Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce: 'Disarmament and world peace are the only statesman-like projects among the many put forward since the war which have not faded out or been dissipated; . . . We are entitled to hope that they will not be allowed to fail but will be carried forward to fulfillment in the face of all opposition.'<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Survey of International Affairs, 1932*, p. 1.



Unfortunately such hopes were doomed in a rather shorter time than is usual with human aspirations. For one reason, the story of reparations and war debts and of disarmament in 1932 had revealed all too clearly that there was little vitality in the post-war settlement and least of all in the post-war system of collective security based upon the League. 'In the place of law and rights, there emerged,' as one writer has neatly put it, 'brutal facts.'<sup>11</sup> These facts were the wills of the stronger. Bickering and bargaining characteristic of power politics had become the accepted though not yet the frankly avowed method of international relations. Thus far Germany had been at a disadvantage in this game, but beginning in 1933 Hitler was to change all that.

<sup>11</sup> Carl J. Friedrich, *Foreign Policy in the Making* (New York, 1932), p. 222.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE NAZI REVOLUTION, 1933

ON JANUARY 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler, leader of the Nazi or, to give its full name, the National Socialist German Workers' Party, became Chancellor of the German Reich. This event came as something of a surprise. General von Schleicher, who became Chancellor in December 1932, was looked upon as the man of destiny because of his backing by the army and the Junkers. They were regarded as the dominant political forces in Germany after the successive failures of the Social Democrats and the Center Party. Perhaps signs of economic revival and the reduction of the Nazi Reichstag membership from 230 to 196 as a result of the November elections had lulled von Schleicher into a mood of overconfidence. Goebbels, a year and a half later, asserted that the General even threatened to use force against the Nazis at this time. Certainly von Schleicher miscalculated the political factors with which he had to deal when he sought to broaden the basis of his power by attempting to secure the support of trade-unionists and parties of the Left and Center. The Junkers, whom he threatened to expose by publishing the scandals connected with government agricultural subsidies, took fright. With the aid of von Papen, whom Schleicher himself had put into office in 1932, and big industrialists like von Thyssen, they outmaneuvered the General and persuaded or tricked Hindenburg into replacing him with Hitler whom the old President, now in his dotage, had detested because he was both an Austrian and a 'non-com.'

#### *1. The Nazi Revolution in Germany*

Hitler's cabinet was made up of two National Socialists besides himself and nine non-Nazis. The majority of the latter belonged to Hugenberg's Nationalist Party which expected to dominate the Government. In this the party reckoned without its host, for by virtue of the March 5th elections, which gave the Nazis 44 per cent of the popular vote, and of the expulsion of the

Communists from the Reichstag, making the Nazi deputies a majority in that body, the Nationalists could safely be disregarded. By the middle of the summer of 1933, all political parties except the National Socialist were forbidden; Germany was well on the way toward the totalitarianism which brooked no rivals to the Nazi Party in the political, economic, and cultural leadership of the country.

The transition from democracy to dictatorship had been going on since 1930 when Brüning, faced with a hopelessly factionalized Reichstag, had begun the process of 'government-by-decree.' Hitler, by profiting from and improving upon the example set by his enemies, by outwitting his competitors for power and by quashing his opponents, was able to launch his party upon its extraordinary career. On March 23, 1933, the Reichstag, after the expulsion of the Communists, passed the Enabling Act and thus cloaked Hitler's authority with apparent legality. Under this Act the Hitler Government was given sweepingly wide powers for four years, including the making of laws without consulting the Reichstag or gaining the consent of the Reich President. In this semi-legal manner, Hitler completed the conversion of the democratic Weimar Republic into a dictatorship and began that dramatic course of action which led to the triumphs of later years.

Ever since March 1933 the question, 'Why Hitler and the Nazis in Germany?' has been asked and answered over and over again. The importance of the question has rather increased than diminished, particularly since September 1939, because it has become a part of the larger question of what attitude to adopt toward Germany in the realm of international politics.

One school has inevitably arisen to insist, ever more loudly as Hitler moved from triumph to triumph in his foreign relations, that his National Socialist program and action represent the true German character. Echoes of World War propaganda once more reverberate with sounds of 'Pan-Germanism,' 'Nietzsche,' 'militarism,' 'Prussianism,' and the like. Unfortunately the study of history thus far has not, in method or aim, supplied the necessary basis upon which to refute or to affirm hypotheses resting upon assumptions about German or any other national character. Psychologists, when they leap from studies primarily concerned with individuals to national or mass psychology, are not more convincing in their conclusions than political scientists and sociologists who have just begun to emerge from their neat.

diagrammatic charts, in which they used to embalm society and government, into the study of social and political dynamics. In short, the social scientists and the psychologists must, like old-fashioned military men in the face of *Blitzkrieg*, confess their unpreparedness to deal with the surging political and social movements of today.

In favor of the 'German-national-character' school of interpreters, it may be said that probably the Germans share with Eastern European peoples a certain lack of assimilation of the French revolutionary principles which were brought to them at the point of the sword by Napoleon. The nineteenth-century liberalism which stemmed from that revolution and from the development of industry was undoubtedly appreciated in Germany by only a small proportion of the population and that proportion was made up largely of academic people out of touch with the masses. Furthermore, the failure of liberals to unite Germany in 1848 and the subsequent success of Bismarck, with his disdain of talk and his recourse to 'blood and iron,' represented a triumph for force and anti-liberalism which constituted an impressive object-lesson not only for Germans but for the whole of Europe as well. Thus, tradition in Germany was on the side of resort to force. The only element which might have combated this tendency was the Social Democratic Party with its evolutionary socialistic doctrine. But the Social Democrats were discredited after the World War by their signature of the Treaty of Versailles and their failure to rehabilitate Germany in the early post-war years.

While these things may be a matter less of fundamental national character traits than of a century's events and influences, there is one other characteristic that does seem to be a national one — German thoroughness. Whatever Germans undertake, they do thoroughly and completely, whether it be the pursuit of science, the framing of a democratic constitution, the establishment of a dictatorship, or the waging of war. In these last two aspects, what frightens and sometimes disgusts non-Germans is the ruthless pursuit of a set goal with all the energy and dogged persistence which precludes balance, poise, and grace. Something can be said, however, in opposition to the 'German-national-character' school of interpreters. There is scarcely an idea of Hitler's and his party that cannot be traced to non-German Europeans of every nation and age. Obviously his nationalist aims of uniting all Germans were part and parcel of the

'nationalist' era in European history. In his ideas of government Hitler has embodied concepts of leadership such as those evolved, for example, by Thomas Carlyle and only further developed by Nietzsche (in quite a different sense, incidentally, from that employed by the Nazis). These concepts were part of the heritage of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and were obscured in the period before 1914 by the abiding faith of most social scientists in democracy.

Hitler's racial theories stemmed from the Frenchman Gobineau and were further developed by Houston Stewart Chamberlain, English by birth, though German by naturalization. The attempt to control the racial composition of a nation has not been confined to Germany nor to Europe. Even the United States in its immigration laws has tried to favor 'desirable' elements and exclude 'undesirable' ones. As for anti-Semitism, that has been something of a tradition everywhere in Europe east of the Rhine and the Alps. Hitler's ruthlessness in the exercise of state power has likewise been familiar in European thought and practice especially since Machiavelli's apt description of it in the sixteenth century. The opposite concept of the state associated with democratic doctrine is, after all, much younger and consequently less virile, especially in Europe east of the Rhine and the Alps, although, again, the overconfidence of nineteenth-century liberals tended to obscure that fact.

Indeed, Europe and the world, too, wavered at crossroads after the World War. One way led to application in both domestic and international affairs of humanitarian and liberal principles of peace, social and political justice, cooperation in a system recognizing the essential dignity of men whether they were called French, German, Italian, or what not. The other way led to force and dictatorship which meant rivalries, disorder, inhumanity, and war. The latter had been the course pursued for four years in the World War, and that pursued in every great world crisis of modern history — Reformation, Thirty Years' War, French wars of conquest under Louis XIV and Napoleon, German wars of expansion and unity under Frederick the Great and Bismarck. Germany after 1932, along with Japan and later Italy, again openly and frankly chose this road.

Furthermore, there is a logical difficulty with the point of view that German National Socialism in all it does and says is an unalterable expression of the German character. If that is true, then the only hope of ultimate peace in Europe lies either in submis-

sion to German rule or in killing off eighty million Germans. No one would willingly choose the first nor seriously consider the second. After all, the organized movement for international peace is only about a hundred years old and, despite setbacks such as those encountered in 1914-18 and since 1930, may yet gather strength as the old order slowly dies from the results of its own insane and inhumane acts. Accordingly we must proceed upon the theory that the German people accepted Hitlerism because of external conditions rather than because of any internal canker in the soul of Luther's and Goethe's race. 'German national character' has been and can be modified by varying outside conditions.

Some of these historically more recent external factors were obviously the defeat in the World War and the economic hardships which accompanied and followed defeat. It may be argued that the terms of the Treaty of Versailles were not more onerous nor more unjust than those which Germany herself had imposed upon Russia at Brest-Litovsk in 1918 or upon the French in 1870. But that is not the point. First of all, the final terms were far more onerous and harsh than Germany *had been promised* by the actual conditions of the armistice, and thus constituted a defeat for those liberals in Germany who had believed that only through the establishment of a republic could Germany hope to gain a peace of honor and justice. In other words, the peace terms belied the expectations of the very element in Germany that was ready to overthrow past traditions along with the institutions of the Old Reich.

But in addition, and even more important, the peace terms wounded German pride and self-respect. Germany before the World War had struggled with an inferiority complex betrayed in the Kaiser's occasional sword-rattling and the demands for a place in the sun. Yet Germany had reason to be proud of tremendous accomplishments in science, industry, and even in the development of world trade and a colonial empire. Now Germany was deprived of many sovereign rights of an independent state in that her Rhineland was occupied, her waterways put under international control, her economic life mortgaged, her armed forces restricted, and her colonies taken away from her. This was done, according to the treaty, not because she had been defeated, which was the real reason and a reason the Germans could have understood, but because she was alleged to be outside the pale of civilization in that she was guilty of starting the

war, and because she had proved herself incapable of governing colonies properly. These were moral judgments which were of tremendous significance in making Germany's position of inequality shameful and unbearable. Undoubtedly Hitler's shrewdness in blaming Germany's ills upon the *Diktat* of Versailles and his constant propaganda were important factors after 1925 in making Germans conscious of their national humiliation, but before that time the success of the Nationalists, who took the same views of the treaty as he, indicates that there was a deep-seated grievance among the Germans which he merely developed by his propaganda.

Even so, Hitler and his party probably would not have gained power on the issue of Versailles alone. The treaty had, in fact, been revised considerably before he came into office. The evacuation of the Rhineland had taken place, the ending of reparations payments had been effected, and the promise of equality in armaments had been given. Undoubtedly the economic crisis beginning in 1930 tipped the scales in his favor, accompanied as it was by the apparent breakdown of democratic machinery which had compelled the Government for over two years to rule by decree rather than by parliamentary action.

The economic woes of Germany in the depression were all the more grievous because Germany had already experienced a period of inflation between 1921 and 1924 that had bankrupted the middle class; then between 1925 and 1929 a period of comparative prosperity gave promise of better things. Thus in the period of 1930 to 1933 the German people were faced with a reminder of their days of bitterest humiliation and with a blasting of their hopes for the future. When relatively stable democracies like the United States, which by comparison had suffered little, voted for a change of political administration in 1932 to the extent of nearly 59 per cent of the popular vote (a shift since the previous election of over thirteen million votes), it is surprising that the German people gave the party which offered them a way to the promised land and an end of their humiliation and inequalities at home and abroad only 44 per cent of the popular vote on March 5 after the greatest pressure had been brought to bear upon them. One reason, of course, lay in the fact that there were at least two other parties which also represented discontent and even despair, the Nationalists who polled about 8 per cent of the popular vote, and the Communists, who, despite

the campaign waged against them by the Nazis, accounted for almost another 13 per cent.

Although the 'brutalitarian' methods used against the Jews and political enemies at home stirred world opinion into extreme uneasiness over German policy abroad and lost for Germany the good-will which the Stresemann-Curtius-Bruening policy of moderation had gained for her, the advent of the Nazis in Germany did not immediately change the international situation. For, as has been indicated, not only had some revision been achieved under previous régimes, but even the policy of unilateral denunciation of parts of the treaty, when other nations failed to meet German demands, had been inaugurated. Furthermore, competent observers had been reporting since 1931 that all Germans from Left to Right and regardless of party were determined to win back equality among the Great Powers. Equality could only be achieved by revision.

The Nazi Party, however, had stressed certain specific aims that were bound to cause uneasiness once the party came to power. Their determination to unite all Germans meant not only *Anschluss* with Austria, but also the acquisition of territory from every one of Germany's other neighbors. Their insistence that Germany should have still more land over and above that inhabited by Germans in order to give them the necessary 'living space' and their cry for the return of colonies were calculated to alarm all those interested in the *status quo*. Behind all this was Hitler's constant reiteration of what he had said in *Mein Kampf* — that the only method of getting what Germany wanted was the use of force. That required rearming and in every way building up the might of Germany.

In fact it is the use of coercion at home and the practiced deception and the appeal to force in external relations which fundamentally distinguish the Nazi rule from that of previous German Governments. In the matter of economic planning, for example, the Nazi Party policy was but the logical development of a tendency existing in Germany since the days of Bismarck, and the only Nazi innovation was the *coercive* interference of the state and the party in business activity. It has already been stressed that revision in foreign affairs was one of the chief aims of every German Government since 1919. The first method was that of defiance of the Western Powers and rapprochement with Russia up to 1924; that was followed by the method of general reconciliation under Stresemann, and finally by the policy



of threats and denunciation foreshadowed by Bruening and von Papen in 1932, but not really developed until the coming of the Nazis.

Yet so accustomed was Europe and the world to an impotent Germany who could only make protests and win promises, and so sceptical was everyone of the ability of the Austrian dreamer — a scepticism to which the characteristic émigré expectations of a speedy end to the new régime undoubtedly contributed — that few took the advent of the Nazi Party as seriously as hindsight suggests should have been the case. To be sure, there was a certain air of nervousness and anxiety manifested, especially along Germany's eastern and southern borders, which became an increasingly important element in European relations. But Hitler himself attempted to allay mistrust, while his régime was being solidly established at home, when on March 23, 1933, he declared that 'the National Government is willing to hold out its hand for honest reconciliation to every nation that is willing to draw a line through the sad past.'

Aside from the political crisis created in Austria by the Nazi triumph in Germany, the events of 1933 were rather a logical development from those of 1932. There was the same tendency for Europe to rely upon alliances and alignments in order to insure security. There were the failures of economic cooperation and of the Disarmament Conference.

## *2. Alliances and Alignments*

Typical of the tendency to rely more and more upon alliances for security was the consolidation of the Little Entente by the Pact of Organization signed at Geneva on February 16, 1933. The cooperation of Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Jugoslavia began in 1920-21 when by a series of bilateral treaties the three succession states undertook to maintain the boundaries, as laid down in the Treaty of the Trianon, between themselves on the one hand and Hungary on the other, and to prevent a Hapsburg restoration. Their opposition to Hungarian revisionism, stridently and persistently voiced throughout the post-war period, remained almost the only real centripetal force holding the three states together. Each had other interests which tended to force them apart.

Jugoslavia was opposed to Italy in the Adriatic where the Fascist policy of preponderance, greatly promoted by the dom-

ination of Albania after 1927, seemed a constant threat to Yugoslavia's political and economic interests. Neither Czechoslovakia nor Rumania had a direct interest in this problem. Yugoslavia was also opposed to Bulgaria whose enmity, first aroused in 1913 and greatly aggravated by the World War, had never been reduced since Bulgaria wanted a large part of Macedonia that had been awarded to Yugoslavia. Indeed, the frontiers between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria were still closed by barbed wire as late as 1933.

This anti-Bulgarian attitude of Yugoslavia was shared by Rumania, who had likewise taken territory from Bulgaria in 1913, had fought her in the World War, and had never been forgiven for retaining the Dobrudja. On the other hand, the major problem of Rumania, next to the Hungarian, was that of her relations with Soviet Russia, who had never recognized the Rumanian seizure of Bessarabia. Here was another of those closed frontiers left over from 1918. But since Rumania could not rely upon either Yugoslavia or Czechoslovakia for active assistance in case of conflict with the U.S.S.R., she secured a defensive alliance with Poland whose geographical position made her support of value.

This relationship caused another of those cross-currents within the Little Entente. Poland's alliance with Rumania, her possession of a share of the former Hapsburg Empire, her predominantly Slav population, her anti-revisionism, and finally the fact that she, like the three succession states, was aligned with France in the *status-quo* system, all should have impelled her to adhere to the Little Entente. But there had long been a sentimental attachment between the Poles and the Hungarians whose revisionism the Little Entente was opposing. Also there was a conflict between Poland and Czechoslovakia, whose consanguinity and common interest in preventing German revisionism should have brought them together. Starting off badly after the war, they had quarreled over the important industrial center of Teschen. The Poles felt that they had been cheated out of their just share in the region, and this feeling, as well as the problem of minorities in each country, served to poison the relations between the two countries and to prevent the development of a cordial understanding. Without it, Poland's relations with the Little Entente could not be cordial.

Czechoslovakia was the only member of the Little Entente that vigorously opposed German revisionism. All three states

objected to any revision on the general ground that, once started, there was no telling where it might end, while Yugoslavia was directly concerned with the problem of *Anschluss* because that, if brought about, would put a powerful instead of a weak neighbor on her northern boundary. Yet in 1931, both Yugoslavia and Rumania took a more moderate attitude toward the proposed Austro-German customs union than did Czechoslovakia, and at one time seemed inclined to join it as the best available solution of their agrarian difficulties. Conversely, Czechoslovakia's relations with Italy and with Soviet Russia were more friendly than were those of the other two. Furthermore, since Czechoslovakia was striving to construct a liberal democracy and to develop her already fairly well-advanced industrial economy, she presented a contrast to the semi-dictatorial governments and the agrarian conditions of both Rumania and Yugoslavia.

Despite these cleavages in the political and economic spheres and the divergent interests of the three states, Beneš, able Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia and co-worker with Masaryk in the establishment of the Republic, attempted to reform the loosely knit Little Entente by organizing a more solidly unified group. His colleagues in Rumania and Yugoslavia recognized the need of such a development in 1929, but it was not till 1933 that his hopes were realized. At that time several factors operated to bring about closer cooperation.

The severity of the economic depression in the Danubian states had led to a great deal of bickering and bargaining in which the rivalry of the Great Powers was always painfully apparent. As a consequence there was a certain incentive for the states concerned to attempt handling their own problems on their own initiative rather than upon the dictation of the Great Powers. This essentially Great-Power-versus-Little-Power issue was accentuated at the Disarmament Conference in 1932 where disregard of the lesser states led to the attempt for a time to form an eight-state bloc of which Czechoslovakia was a member. The open espousal of Germany's plea for equality and of general revision by Italy was a particular menace to the succession states of Central Europe. It was even rumored that the two Powers had made a deal to divide Europe between them. Certainly the suggestion by Mussolini in October 1932 that the affairs of Europe should be settled by Italy, France, Germany, and England could not but alarm those states of the Danube who not

only feared the effect of revision but also realized that such a development as a four-Power alliance would spell defeat for any hope of a democratically organized Europe in which all states would have a voice.

In view of these developments, the Foreign Ministers of the Little Entente states at a conference in Belgrade, December 18–19, 1932, decided to create a permanent council, consisting of the three Foreign Ministers, which was to meet three times a year and to have a permanent secretariat. The latter would prepare for the conferences and keep the members informed of significant political and economic developments not only in the Little Entente states but in other states of Central Europe as well. The advent of Hitler at the end of the following January, accompanied by rumors of a revisionist bloc of Italy, Germany, Hungary, and possibly Austria, and by the discovery at Hirtenberg of an illegal shipment of arms from Italy to Hungary, not only hastened but led to an extension of the plans already laid down at Belgrade. When the Little Entente Ministers met at Geneva on February 14–15, 1933, they drew up the statute of a permanent ‘unified international organization’ to operate with respect to statutory, political, and economic affairs, and agreed that the political and treaty relations of any one of the states with other Powers would require the unanimous accord of the Little Entente Council. Thus, as it was expressed at the time, the Little Entente hoped to become a ‘fifth Great Power.’

The pact of organization met with approval in France and in Poland who was tending at just this time toward a rapprochement with the Little Entente for the same reasons that had impelled the three member states to draw closer together. But, as was to be expected, the pact was hailed with distrust in Germany, Hungary, and Italy, where it was considered to be another French inspiration representing a return to the pre-war system of rival blocs. The Italian press reported that there were secret military clauses, directed against Italy and Hungary and based upon similar provisions in treaties among the Little Entente states in 1927 and 1929. Of course, the Little Entente statesmen hotly denied that they were activated by French prompting or that there were any secret plans for attacking Italy or Hungary. Nevertheless, the consolidation of the Little Entente undoubtedly confirmed in Mussolini the desire expressed in the previous autumn to solve European problems by a pact among the four Great Powers.

The immediate occasion for Mussolini's proposal was a visit of British Prime Minister MacDonald and Foreign Secretary Sir John Simon to Rome, March 18-20, 1933, when they attempted to win Italian support for the latest British proposal at the Disarmament Conference. What Mussolini proposed was: (1) That Italy, Great Britain, France, and Germany cooperate to maintain the peace in accordance with the Kellogg Pact and other declarations; (2) that they confirm the principle of revision in accordance with the clauses of the League Covenant and within its framework; (3) that in case of the failure of the Disarmament Conference, they give practical effect to the recognition of Germany's right to rearm, that this rearmament should be accomplished by stages to be agreed upon, and they should accord similar treatment to Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria; (4) that in all matters affecting both European and extra-European questions, the four Powers pursue a common line of action. The agreement was to be ratified by the respective parliaments and was to run for ten years, thereafter to be extended automatically unless denounced one year in advance.

It is not entirely clear just why Mussolini made this proposal. It has been alleged that the drift of negotiations at the Disarmament Conference had alarmed him into thinking that Italy might be shoved aside by France, Great Britain, and the United States; that Mussolini wished to break the League of Nations, founded upon democratic principles, and substitute a Fascist concept of hierarchy in international affairs; that he wanted to combat and weaken the newly organized Little Entente. In a speech of June 7 to the Italian Chamber, Mussolini himself insisted that the proposed pact was the logical outcome of the Locarno Agreements of 1925 and was in conformity with the organization of the League where the permanent European seats on the Council were held by the four Great Powers. He repudiated the idea that the pact was directed against anyone and mentioned Soviet Russia, the United States, Belgium, Austria, Hungary, Turkey, and Greece as states with which collaboration would be necessary. He further declared that revision was not to be forced upon anyone. He was undoubtedly influenced in these remarks by the objections that had been raised to his proposal between March and June, but was probably very near the spirit of his original point of view when he explained that the balance-of-power concept found in the pact 'a new expression and a new possibility of fruitful and constructive developments';

and that England and Italy, because of their situation and the 'natural factors' characteristic of them, were 'called to maintain a balance in Europe.'

In other words, Mussolini, who at this time undoubtedly was sincere in his desire for peace, wished to insure Italy a seat in the inner circle of European councils. The obviously widening rift between France and Germany over the problems of equality and disarmament which had really been swallowed up in the general theme of revision might result in a split among the Great Powers. In that case, Italy would have to choose sides and if she wished to maintain the claim to revision for herself, would be forced to join the weaker side of Germany and the other defeated states. On the other hand, if Italy took the part of the side hostile to Germany she would lose hope of revision and remain a power secondary to France, with her group of satellites in Eastern Europe, and to Great Britain. There is also, perhaps, a grain of truth in the view that Mussolini was a little nervous over the policy of the Nazis in Germany. In the spring of 1933, he indicated that he wanted Dollfuss to remain in power in Austria, and that he wished to prevent Austrian union with a powerful Germany. There is reason to believe, therefore, that he envisaged the Four-Power Pact as a means of keeping Germany peaceful by holding out the promise of revision and equality in armament.

More color is lent to this interpretation when one reflects that in his original draft Mussolini had not really provided effective means for bringing about revision. The absence of a published official text for many weeks after the proposal was handed to the British statesmen gave rise to some false impressions. One was that the French modified Mussolini's original proposal so as to make revision possible only within the framework of the League of Nations. That is not true, for an examination of Mussolini's own first draft will show that he proposed revision through League procedure and all that the French did was to change the wording and tighten up a little the guarantees that nothing would be done outside the League. Now any astute observer of European politics knows that revision by the League meant postponement to the Greek Kalends. It is true that Mussolini had been fairly explicit about how Germany was to achieve equality in armament should the Conference fail. His aim was to bring it about by stages that were to be agreed upon among the four Powers. It is true that France did modify the original draft to

make the objectives and the procedure much less clear. But realists, among whom Mussolini was accounted one, had already come to recognize that revision of the most significant 'sore spots' in Europe could be accomplished only by coercion. Certainly Mussolini did not yet contemplate that, and consequently the conclusion must be accepted that he wanted to keep Italy in the center of things and prevent Germany from too violent action that would injure Italy directly or indirectly. In short, he wanted to cooperate with England in maintaining a balance of forces.

MacDonald was only too glad to collaborate with Mussolini, since his proposal contained just the right mixture of idealism and realism, of clarity of intention and vagueness of procedure, which appealed to the mystical peripatetic who was at this time spending most of his time hastening from place to place in the World Lyceum expounding principles of brotherhood and peace. The note of revision, however, raised alarm which proved to be groundless, but nevertheless gave an opportunity on April 13 for Sir Austen Chamberlain, C. R. Attlee, and others to warn the British Government, in tones which heartened France and her friends in Central Europe, that without care and foresight revision was very dangerous ground to tread upon. The popular French reaction to the Four-Power Pact proposal can well be imagined when it is recalled that rumors in February of an entente among Germany, Italy, and Hungary and the long-drawn-out negotiations over the Hirtenberg arms affairs had brought Franco-Italian relations to one of those often recurring states of high tension. The cordial reception given the proposal in Germany did not contribute to French complacency. It must be acknowledged, nevertheless, that Premier Daladier, from the first, examined the plans objectively and did his best to quiet the clamor in the Chamber and the press as well as to meet the protests received from Poland and the Little Entente. The former felt aggrieved that her ambition to act the rôle of a Great Power had again been disregarded, and the members of the Little Entente feared that revision might be forced upon them. They soon realized, however, that their fears were groundless and that France was no less determined than themselves to guarantee that there should be no revision outside the League of Nations.

On the other hand, the discussion served one useful purpose, in that it brought protests from every one of the statesmen in-

volved — British, French, Czech, as well as Italian and German — that the peace treaties were not eternal and must be someday, somehow, revised. The question was still open whether that revision was to come peacefully or forcibly. Some writers had already begun to say that it could only come about by the use of force or by 'dictation' and it seemed to one commentator, in words which, after Munich, have a prophetic ring, 'that the victors are not yet sufficiently afraid of Hitler's Germany to use dictation in its favor.'<sup>1</sup>

For a time, because of the storm of opposition against the pact in April and the apparent truculence of Nazi Germany in early May, it seemed as if Mussolini's proposal would die a quick death. In the middle of May, however, several factors connected with the Disarmament Conference, not the least of which was Hitler's very pacific speech of May 17, dispelled the gloom, and the conclusion of the pact was pressed forward as something which might aid not only in the disarmament problem, but at the World Economic Conference to open in London on June 12. Final negotiations resulted in the initialing of the pact on June 8 and in its signature on July 15. Since it was not to come into force until ratified and since ratification never took place, the 'Agreement of Understanding and Cooperation,' as it was officially called, is of significance solely for what it revealed of political conditions at the time and for its temporary results.

Most obvious of the latter was the fact that the agreement was hailed as a diplomatic triumph for France and conversely a diplomatic defeat for Germany. The comment is more valuable as an insight into the psychology of the times than as a true commentary on what had happened. Certainly France had excluded the word 'revision' from the text by referring to it only through mentioning Article XIX of the Covenant, and had reworded the promises regarding German armament equality so as to make them more vague. Yet in the last analysis, France had suffered a diplomatic defeat, too, in that her discussion and eventual signature of the pact offended the Poles whose determination to free themselves from the appearance of French tutelage and to attempt a balancing policy in Central Europe dates from this time. Finally, the negotiations proved to be a means of lessening the tension which had existed between France and Italy, and, in fact, to inaugurate something of a rapprochement which bore

<sup>1</sup> H. N. Brailsford, 'Revising the Treaties,' *New Republic*, April 19, 1933, pp. 271-72.



fruit a year and a half later. It is interesting to note, moreover, that three men who met at Munich in 1938 were heading their respective Governments in 1933 when the Four-Power Pact was negotiated — Daladier, Hitler, and Mussolini — and that the fourth at Munich, Neville Chamberlain, was Chancellor of the Exchequer in the MacDonald Government.

There was some feeling in 1933 that even if Mussolini had not intended to make his pact a means of uniting Western Europe against Communist Russia, one of Hitler's reasons for joining was to do just that. Whether or not there was any truth in that point of view, certainly one of the most significant factors in European affairs was the gradual return of Russia to the circle of Great Powers, a trend which was greatly accelerated in 1933.

The relations of Soviet Russia with nearly all Powers both great and small had been uneven and spasmodic — periods of open hostility alternating with those of reluctant and suspicious diplomatic and economic intercourse. The fundamental reason lay in the Communist doctrine of world revolution which, for ten years after the Bolshevik Revolution, underlay Soviet policy. When the attempt to put this doctrine into effect was at least temporarily abandoned in 1928 by Stalin, who triumphed over his party opponents on the platform of first building socialism in Russia before attempting socialism throughout the world, the essential condition for more genuinely peaceful relations with the rest of the world was created.

The principal reason behind the change of policy was the necessity of peace for Russia in order to carry out the stupendous tasks of industrialization and collectivization set forth in the first two Five-Year Plans, 1928–37. No better personality for the new 'peace policy' could have been found than that of Maxim Litvinov, a realist and wit who had lived and worked much abroad before the revolution and had served a long apprenticeship in the Soviet Foreign Office under Chicherin whom he succeeded as Commissar of Foreign Affairs in 1930. Litvinov took a leading part both in the lively support accorded by Soviet Russia after 1927 to the movement for disarmament and the promulgation of the Paris Pact renouncing war and in the negotiation of many bilateral treaties of neutrality and conciliation. His efforts might have borne earlier fruit in bringing Russia back into the concert of Great Powers had it not been for the effects of the depression, Soviet adherence to the policy of revision, and the

fear of Communism aroused in the earlier days of its world-revolutionary zeal.

The Five-Year Plan itself had tended to revive anti-Soviet feeling because, it was argued, the effort to pay for necessary imports of machinery and expert assistance would lead to the dumping of goods, produced by forced labor, on the world market. Indeed, the years 1930 and 1931 were filled with recriminations, while charges against the Soviet were backed up in many countries by the imposition of trade restrictions designed to keep out its goods. The result of this movement and of the general decline of world commerce and of prices was to reduce the value of Soviet trade from \$910,000,000 in 1930 to \$570,000,000 in 1932 and thus greatly to cripple the capacity for carrying out the economic plan. Although Litvinov proposed an 'economic non-aggression' pact at a meeting of the Commission on European Union in May 1931, little was done immediately to mitigate the restrictions upon Soviet imports.

But from a strictly European point of view, it was the identification of Soviet Russia with the policy of revision that weighed against her among the French and other *status-quo* Powers. Soviet Russia had been very scornful of the League of Nations and had criticized freely other aspects of the peace treaties. Even more significant, however, was the fact that two of her closest friends were Turkey and Germany, with both of whom the Soviet had established relations at moments when they were in bitter opposition to the victors in the World War. With Germany the Soviet in 1926 had made a treaty of neutrality which was regarded as an important guarantee that the Pacts of Locarno and German entry into the League would not be followed by German participation in an attack upon the Soviet Union. This was supplemented by a treaty of 1929 providing for conciliation in case of disputes arising between them, and was preceded and followed by trade agreements which gave Germany first place in Soviet foreign trade. This situation did not particularly affect Soviet-Italian relations which were fairly stable, but, together with the economic considerations after 1929, helped to make relations with France and with Conservative Governments of Great Britain unpleasant.

Two factors finally changed the relations of Soviet Russia with Western Europe and especially with France. One was the Japanese policy of aggrandizement in Manchuria, launched in September 1931, leading the U.S.S.R. to fear that her own terri-

tory might ultimately become the object of Japanese attack. This fear seemed confirmed when Japan refused offers of a non-aggression pact made in December 1931 and November 1932. The Soviet Union took steps to defend itself in the Far East by strengthening railroad communications and increasing the number of troops there. It was also able to renew diplomatic relations with China in December 1932 and thus repair the break which dated from 1927. This situation in the Far East compelled Soviet leaders to review the situation in Europe because it became imperative for them to prevent a combination of attacks from both east and west.

But the other factor in Europe, and one of greatest importance, was the rise of Nazism and the drift toward dictatorship in Germany who up to 1932 had been Russia's staunchest friend. Soviet leaders believed that Schleicher, as Minister of Defense in Papen's Cabinet and later as Chancellor, was attempting to win European favor by offering to fight capitalism's battle against Communist Russia. They knew from Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and the writings of his foreign adviser, the Baltic German Rosenberg, that the Nazis believed in a crusade against the Soviet Union that would not only put down the 'Jewish-Communist' movement, but provide Germany with living space in Eastern Europe. To be sure, the Nazi Government insisted at first that their quarrel with Communism was an internal matter. Hitler on May 5, 1933, ratified a protocol of 1930, which provided for the renewal of the 1926 neutrality treaty, and approved granting of commercial credits for trade with Soviet Russia. On the other hand, Rosenberg, who became head of the Nazi Party foreign policy office on April 1, was known to be in touch with Ukrainian counter-revolutionary organizations in southern Russia; and on June 16 at the London Economic Conference Hugenberg presented a memorandum which seemed to confirm earlier Nazi statements concerning expansion eastward at the expense of Russia. Although Hugenberg was subsequently disavowed, public appeals by both Rosenberg and Hitler at the Nuremberg Party Congress in September and at the time of the withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference in October, belied the claims that anti-Communism was an internal issue only. Both men seemed to be making a bid for European support on the grounds that Nazi Germany was saving Western civilization from Jewish-Communist-Asiatic-Russian degradation.

Under the circumstances it is not surprising that German-

Soviet relations became 'unrecognizable,' as Litvinov put it on December 29, 1933, and that the Soviet Union long before Hitler actually came into power, and especially afterward, not only veered away from alignment with Germany, but also joined the camp of the *status-quo* Powers, believing with them that the revisionist policy of Japan in the Far East and of Germany in Europe meant war. War for Soviet Russia was regarded by her leaders at this time as a disaster, not because of any ideological aversion to it, but because it would endanger the whole program of industrialization.

The most important index of a change in Soviet Russian policy and of her return to respectability was her relation with France, whom Stalin as late as June 1930 called 'the most aggressive and militaristic country among all the aggressive and militaristic countries of the world.' Tension between the two countries began to ease in 1931 when a treaty of non-aggression was initialed in August. France delayed signature, however, until the Soviet could conclude similar treaties with Poland and Rumania. Although negotiations between Rumania and the Soviet were unsuccessful, Poland initialed a non-aggression treaty in January 1932 and signed it in July when the drift toward dictatorship in Germany had become all too apparent. In the summer of 1932, Herriot, who became French Premier in June and had long advocated rapprochement with the Soviets, renewed negotiations with the U.S.S.R. and, on November 29, signed a non-aggression pact and a conciliation convention. Rumania had indicated that she would not oppose such action and Russia had promised not to use force in settling the Bessarabian question despite the absence of a non-aggression pact with Rumania. While French nationalists disapproved of the Soviet pact, the public in general favored it with the result that the Government easily obtained its ratification on February 15, 1933.

Perhaps even more significant than the Non-Aggression Pact of November 1932 was Litvinov's speech of February 1933 at the Disarmament Conference, when, in proposing a definition of the aggressor, he said that the French demand for security must be seriously considered. His sentiments were echoed by the Soviet press, indicating that this was no mere personal opinion. German writers have since pointed out that on March 4, when the French idea of security was linked with the Russian idea of defining aggression, the first step was taken toward the Franco-Russian mutual assistance pact of 1935.

At the same time that Franco-Soviet relations were becoming more and more cordial, Russian relations with Great Britain were worsened by the failure to conclude a commercial agreement after the adoption of imperial preferences at the Ottawa Conference of 1932 had compelled the British Government to denounce the previous trade treaty with the Soviet Union. The trade relationships were complicated by the British decision in March 1933 to embargo all Soviet goods when the trial of Metropolitan-Vickers Company engineers at Moscow resulted on March 18 in the conviction and imprisonment of two British subjects. The ground was cleared for better relations, however, when Litvinov and Sir John Simon resumed negotiations on June 26 and when Britain lifted the embargoes on July 1 at the same time that the Soviet released the British engineers. These difficulties illustrated two things about British-Soviet relations that were to continue to play an important rôle in later years: The British conservatives were far more susceptible to anti-Soviet propaganda than the French, partly because of their fear of Communism, but also because of the hundred-year-old anti-Russian tradition, fundamentally arising from fear of former Tsarist and now Communist Russian threats to India and the route to it; and Englishmen of all parties were far less frightened by the bogey of a revived and rearmed Germany than were the French.

The greatest triumph of Soviet diplomacy in 1933 was undoubtedly the conclusion of the 'Convention for the Definition of Aggression' not only with her neighbors, most of whom had signed treaties of non-aggression, but also with members of the Little Entente who had heretofore refused to recognize the Soviet Government. On July 3, 4, and 5, definition-of-aggression pacts were signed with Afghanistan, Persia, Turkey, Rumania, Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Lithuania. The wording of these conventions, originally suggested by Litvinov to the Disarmament Conference and adopted by its political committee, won for the Soviet no little sympathy throughout the Western world. It seemed to emphasize not only her determination to avoid war, but also her willingness to go farther than anyone had yet done to eliminate between herself and other Powers all sources of friction. Aggression was defined not only as attack upon another's territory, but also the fostering of armed bands who might invade another's territory. Furthermore, it was agreed that political or economic considerations, or

the internal conditions or conduct of any state could not be regarded as an excuse for aggression.

This diplomatic triumph, often referred to as the only accomplishment of any worth during the World Economic Conference, went far to rehabilitate Soviet Russia in world opinion and make her appear to be a genuinely pacific power. More important, however, in emphasizing Soviet withdrawal from the alignment with Germany was the signature of a non-aggression pact with Italy on September 2. *Izvestia* immediately pointed out that Italy had not attacked the U.S.S.R. and had appreciated its rising importance. This was undoubtedly intended as a hint to Germany. Furthermore, the Russian press interpreted Italy's willingness to sign the non-aggression pact at this moment as an indication that the author of the Four-Power Pact did not intend it to become an instrument of anti-Soviet sentiment.

Two further achievements, worth mentioning, capped the year's diplomatic accomplishments. One was the establishment on July 28 for the first time of diplomatic relations with the Soviet by Spain, an act which was undoubtedly of some significance in the internal struggles of the Spanish Republic. But even more important was the recognition of the U.S.S.R. by the United States, effected in an exchange of notes on November 16. As a result of the year's work, Litvinov could reflect no little pride in his achievements when he reviewed the course of events before the Central Executive Committee on December 29, 1933. He insisted, as always, that the U.S.S.R. wanted good relations with everyone who wished to have them with her. Those whose acts belied such a desire were Germany and Japan. In view of their attitude, the Soviet had to look to her own security and intended to build up her armed forces in order to defend every inch of Russian territory.

Thus in 1933 the tendency toward the isolation, if not encirclement, of Germany seemed dominant and at the same time there began that Communist-Nazi antagonism which became so significant three years later.

### *3. Roosevelt Scuttles the London Economic Conference*

While the nations of Europe were shifting and maneuvering in the game of power politics that became so popular upon the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship in Germany, the two international conferences of 1933 provided a stage for last-minute ef-

forts at international cooperation. One was the World Monetary and Economic Conference which met at London from June 12 to July 27 and the other was the continuation of the Disarmament Conference at Geneva.

The Economic Conference had been agreed upon at Lausanne in July 1932 when a committee was set up to prepare for it. The European Powers had hoped that some kind of debt settlement by which either a cancellation or a drastic reduction of debts to the United States could be effected would precede the world conference. But hopes of debt cancellation were soon blasted by the action and attitude of the United States Senate.

Optimists were encouraged, however, by the visit of British Prime Minister MacDonald to the United States in April 1933, at the conclusion of which he and President Roosevelt jointly declared that both Great Britain and the United States 'were looking with a like purpose and a close similarity of method at the objectives of the Conference.' But again expectations were belied, for before MacDonald reached England, President Roosevelt, pursuing a policy of domestic price-lifting, took the United States off the gold standard. Yet the President announced on May 16 that the 'stabilization of currencies, the freeing of the flow of world trade,' and the raising of price levels by international action were the purposes of the Conference.

Of course the actions of the President spoke louder than his words, but other countries were not free from the same taint of insincerity. Great Britain, for example, agreed with the Dominions at the Ottawa Conference of 1932 to confine imperial trade more within imperial channels. That really meant 'Buy British' and let the rest of the world look out for itself. In other words, the policy and spirit of economic nationalism was still too strong in the world to bode anything but ill for international efforts to end the economic depression.

Everyone recognized the trouble. A committee of experts who drew up a report on the agenda of the Conference, in January 1933, declared that three years of depression had led to so many economic restraints in the international field that the necessary program to be followed was one of economic disarmament by the removal of trade barriers. In attempting to achieve greater flexibility in world economic conditions, the experts arranged the discussion at the Conference under two main divisions, financial and economic, with each division embracing three fields. The financial division included: (1) monetary and

credit policy, with a recommendation for the restoration of the gold standard; (2) prices, with the experts agreeing that measures should be adopted to reduce the disequilibrium between prices and costs, thus lowering the debt burden; and (3) resumption of the movement of capital, the importance of which the experts greatly stressed. On the economic side, the fields embraced were: (1) the restrictions on international trade; (2) tariffs and treaty policy; and (3) the problems of the organization of production and trade. While the committee might have taken the view that a world economic conference should attempt to lay the foundations for some kind of planned world economy, its recommendations stressed instead the traditional method of merely trying to remove abnormal barriers and conditions detrimental to trade. Thus, since nothing in place of economic nationalism was really suggested, there was little likelihood of a successful conference.

On June 12, 1933, in the Geological Museum at South Kensington, the World Economic Conference convened. By June 30 it had been torpedoed. Firmly resolved by now to raise internal prices at the expense of stability of the dollar on the foreign exchange markets, President Roosevelt repudiated his own representative who had signed a proposal of the Conference to stabilize currencies. Mr. Roosevelt spoke about 'the excuse for the continuation of the basic economic errors that underlie so much of the world-wide depression,' about 'the specious fallacy of achieving a temporary and probably artificial stability in foreign exchange.' After that shot, the Conference slowly sank to its adjournment on July 27. The only achievement of any importance to its credit was an agreement by the principal wheat-exporting countries to limit their exports during the next twelve months, an agreement subsequently broken by Argentina.

Thus it was that during this year as before, every effort to correct economic maladjustments by international action failed completely. The straitjacket of trade barriers and restrictions had become too tight or, weakened by their own efforts in other fields, the world's leaders were unable to free themselves from the consequences of their own actions.

The significance of this failure lay in two directions. From the point of view of economic problems, it meant that economic nationalism was to remain the method of the day. International cooperation had failed. There was nothing left, especially for poor and backward countries, except to bargain and dicker as



best they could. Most successful at this game were the dictatorships, which were able to estimate their needs and their resources and devise a policy of barter which, while it did not give them abundance, enabled them to live. From the point of view of politics, the failure of the Conference was just another of the many blows to post-war idealism in international relations and particularly to the concept of democracy in world affairs. It thus contributed indirectly to the foundering of the effort at world disarmament.

#### *4. Hitler Quits the Disarmament Conference*

The Disarmament Conference reopened on February 2, 1933, after several days of wrangling in the directing bureau over procedure. International affairs were even more clouded than they had been when the Conference first opened a year before. Though Hitler had become Chancellor of Germany and the dispute in South America over the Chaco was still unsettled despite five years of League and American efforts, the most significant development was that in the Far East. Japan had overrun Manchuria and established the state of Manchoukuo. But, not satisfied with that, the Japanese armies continued to advance and had taken Shanhaikwan, the gateway to China proper, and were preparing to enter Jehol. When the Assembly of the League adopted measures for the pacification of the Far East, Japan refused to accept them, and gave notice, on February 24, of her intention to withdraw from the League of Nations. Thus, for the first time, a great World Power renounced the League and its methods. This blow, coming in the midst of efforts to limit armament, was a bad omen for the success of any attempt to assure peace upon the basis of a system which was already beginning to break up.

Although France and Great Britain were at loggerheads over procedure, the fundamental issues facing the Conference were still those of revision represented by Germany, and security championed by France. The only change in the situation from the previous year was that the Declaration of December 11, 1932, had laid down the principle that revision and security, in so far as armament was concerned, were to be achieved simultaneously. The Conference in February 1933 concerned itself with both aspects at the same time, basing discussion upon the French plan submitted in the previous November. This pro-

posed a general agreement among all Powers to implement the Paris Pact by providing for consultation and sanctions in case of aggression, and a special plan for Europe involving a uniform military system for all countries together with a security pact. Germany and other revisionist countries were opposed to the plan because they claimed that it did not provide for effective armament reduction or for the abolition of offensive weapons. As a result of this opposition and the declaration of Germany and Italy that they would not participate further in discussing a plan which they opposed, the Conference reached a deadlock on March 7.

Coincidentally, Europe experienced a general tension considered at the time to be more threatening than any situation since 1914. The German elections of March 5 had confirmed the Nazi Party in power; on March 6, the Poles had reinforced the guard at the munition dump of Westerplatte outside Danzig, and were later rumored to be concentrating troops in the Polish Corridor; on March 7, Chancellor Dollfuss of Austria proclaimed a dictatorial régime; fears mounted on all sides. In this emergency, the British Government decided to offer some concrete plan for the Disarmament Conference. Gathering their experts together from all government departments concerned, the British hastily drew up a proposal which Ramsay MacDonald presented to the Conference on March 16. The Prime Minister and his Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon, had already prepared the ground by conversations with the representatives of France, Germany, Italy, and the United States, and their trip to Rome on March 18 was designed to carry the work of negotiation and pacification further. Without doubt they succeeded in preventing shipwreck of the Conference for the time being and in introducing a new atmosphere, two evidences of which were Mussolini's proposal of a Four-Power Pact and Hitler's conciliatory speech of March 23.

The Disarmament Conference, before adjourning on March 27 for the Easter holidays, decided to take up Part I of the British plan when the sessions were resumed on April 25. Part I was concerned with security and proposed a method of consultation in case of a threat to peace in any way contrary to the terms of the Paris Pact. So much difficulty arose over proposed amendments and over the attitude of the United States, still reluctant to enter any formal pact even of consultation, that further discussion was postponed on April 27.

The second part of the British plan which was next considered proposed the limitation of effectives according to figures worked out as a basis of discussion. It accepted the French suggestion that all armies be organized on the same basis, and that police forces and other semi-military organizations be included in the total sum of armed men permitted each nation. Herr Nadolny, German delegate, not only refused to consider these proposals, but even refused to accept the British plan as the basis for a future convention. Another complete deadlock was accordingly reached on May 8 over the issue of who were to be counted as effectives, and the tension was even greater than it had been in March because this time both sides appeared to be more intransigent.

Germany, in fact, was doing her utmost to win support for her views, especially in England. Rosenberg's mission there had ended disastrously, in large part from lack of tact, and also in part from a recrudescence of anti-revisionist sentiment of which the debate of April 13 over the Four-Power Pact had given evidence. On the other hand, Hitler had assured the Polish Ambassador on May 4 that the German Government would adjust its differences with Poland only within the framework of the League of Nations. Such peaceful gestures seemed more than offset by the bellicose utterances of Nadolny at Geneva, of von Neurath, the Foreign Minister who had been retained in office by Hitler at the insistence of Hindenburg, and of Vice-Chancellor von Papen at Berlin. The burden of their remarks was not only that Germany could no longer be dictated to, but that she would rearm since the rest of the world would not disarm.

Daladier declared that France would never submit to threats, and his Foreign Minister, Paul-Boncour, again warned that he might reveal the contents of the secret dossier on the extent of German armament. But surprisingly enough it was a member of the British Government who was most outspoken at this time, perhaps because of the wave of anti-Nazi feeling passing through the Anglo-Saxon world on both sides of the Atlantic. Lord Hailsham, Secretary of State for War, told the House of Lords that if the German Government left the Disarmament Conference, Germany would be liable to the sanctions laid down in the Treaty of Versailles. As a matter of fact, there was no legal justification for such a threat, which makes its utterance appear more significant.

The upshot was that President Roosevelt began that practice

to which he has fairly consistently adhered in time of crisis of appealing to other nations in the name of peace and cooperation. On May 16, the day before Hitler was scheduled to speak to the German Reichstag on the international situation, Roosevelt cabled to the heads of states which were members of the Disarmament Conference urging that the work of disarmament be continued along the lines laid down in the British proposal.

It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the world began its anxious listening to the Chief of the Nazi Government on the next day, May 17, and breathed a sigh of relief over a speech 'which could scarcely have been equaled by Stresemann or Bruening' in its tone of conciliation. While Hitler made it perfectly clear that Germany would make no concessions on the question of equality, nevertheless he dispelled the feeling of tension. In Great Britain especially the tone of the press toward the Nazi foreign policy changed perceptibly. Furthermore, following Hitler's speech, Nadolny announced that Germany would now accept the British plan as the basis for a future disarmament convention, something he had refused to do up to that time.

One more contribution was made to the atmosphere of renewed hope when Norman Davis, on May 22, made a significant declaration of American policy. He said that the alternative to disarmament would be the collapse of peace machinery and the outbreak of war. He argued that any nation which failed to give conclusive evidence of its pacific aims and insisted upon rearming when other nations had taken substantial steps toward disarmament would bear the burden of reproach for failure of the Disarmament Conference. This obvious condemnation of the previous German position was heartening to France and her friends. But much more important was Davis's announcement that the United States would assist in organizing peace and to that end would consult with other states in case of threats to peace and would refrain from any action that would defeat collective efforts taken to restore peace if the United States concurred with respect to who was the aggressor. This was regarded as tantamount to a promise that the American Government was prepared to waive its neutral rights in case the League decided to impose sanctions against an aggressor, and, therefore, as a second step by the United States within a year toward the participation in collective security. Unfortunately, the effect so far as Europe and the Disarmament Conference were concerned was somewhat dulled by the action of the Senate Foreign Rela-

tions Committee, five days after Davis spoke, in refusing to permit the President to discriminate between aggressors and aggrieved in a future international dispute.

Despite the change in atmosphere, and the resumption of discussion on the British draft plan, little was accomplished. Other matters came to the fore such as the initialing of the Four-Power Pact on June 8, and the opening of the London Economic Conference on June 12. The Soviet delegation had been particularly anxious since early in February to have the Conference adopt a definition of an aggressor, and achieved some success when the Political Commission voted on May 24 upon a definition presented by Politis of Greece but based upon Russian suggestions. In addition, it was becoming clearer every day that Soviet Russia had cast her lot with the *status-quo* group. Karl Radek, the most brilliant Bolshevik journalist, published a series of articles in *Izvestia* in May pointing out that revision meant war. At the same time the Franco-Soviet and Polish-Soviet rapprochement proceeded apace.

At length the Disarmament Conference decided to adjourn on June 29 until October 16, and instructed the President, Mr. Henderson, to undertake negotiations privately with the various Governments on all outstanding questions. Unfortunately for Mr. Henderson, he found little interest in the subject of disarmament and much more in the question of whether or not Germany was rearming. Likewise he found that the German Government was unwilling to make any concessions and indeed felt that the refusal of others to meet the German viewpoint constituted the principal obstruction to the work of limiting arms. As the summer wore on, protestations of peace became fainter and emphasis upon arms and military training became firmer in the public speeches of Reich officials. Both Rosenberg and Hitler at the Nazi Party Congress early in September asked Europe to look upon Germany as the bulwark of Western civilization against Communism, and such a view implied a strong and armed Germany. Indeed, by the end of the summer there was no longer any thought of disarmament and the whole aim and spirit of Germany was to rearm. Naturally this caused a reaction in France where her statesmen talked of military strength and defenses — not a frame of mind for disarmament. Great Britain for some time did nothing, but public opinion was divided between those who wanted to participate in a better security system and those who wanted to withdraw even from such com-

mitments as those under the Locarno Pacts by which England was pledged to maintain the territorial *status quo* along Germany's western boundary.

The initiative, however, in preparing once more for the reopening of the Conference came from the British. In September they began talks with the French Government into which they drew the Italian and American representatives. France indicated that the British plan, accepted by everybody as the basis of discussion, must be revised to provide for a period — about four years — in which Germany should reorganize her army on a short-term basis and in which machinery of supervision and control of all armament should be set up. Then another period of about four years was to follow in which Germany might be permitted some rearmament and the other Powers would be required to reduce their armament. The general agreement of the four Powers on these modifications was communicated to Germany on September 24. The plan was distasteful to the Germans because it did not grant them equality until after the eight-year period and did not begin the process of disarmament for other Powers until after a four-year lapse of time.

On October 6, the German Government communicated an *aide-mémoire* to the other Powers setting forth its views of the new proposals. Germany took its stand on the British plan which had envisaged a five-year period of adjustment in which armaments would be brought to agreed-upon levels. Germany was willing that the process of change should take place by stages, but insisted that in all types of weapons that were eventually to be retained, Germany should be permitted in this period to stock herself. One concession to the French was that of agreeing to transform the *Reichswehr* into a short-term army. The position of Germany was rather cleverly chosen to make it appear that France, Great Britain, and the others who had consulted with them had changed the basis already agreed upon for discussion and had moved farther away from equality rather than closer to it since the Declaration of December 11, 1932.

Naturally this position caused some perturbation among the British and French statesmen, but for good or ill, they agreed to stick to their latest proposal which was especially noteworthy because it was the first one since the Disarmament Conference met to receive the support of England, France, Italy, the United States, and many other important delegations. Armed with knowledge of this backing, Sir John Simon virtually declared to

the Bureau of the Conference on October 14 that there would be no concession to the German point of view. Hitler, in his reply on the evening of the same day, loosed his first great diplomatic bombshell by announcing that Germany had withdrawn from the Conference, would withdraw from the League of Nations, and would hold an election to ascertain whether or not the German people approved of his policy. Stunned by this turn of events, the Conference met on the sixteenth. With some delegates registering reservations, it approved a letter from President Henderson to the German Government in reply to von Neurath's notice of withdrawal, and adjourned until October 26. Subsequent postponements of the date of meeting reflected the fact that the Disarmament Conference, although it did finally meet again from May 29 to June 11, 1934, had received a death-blow.

The formal epitaph of the disarmament movement was written by the German Government in a memorandum communicated to the French Ambassador on December 18, 1933:

1. The reduction of the armaments of other European countries can only be practically considered if such reduction be carried out by every country in the world; but nobody believes any longer in the possibility of such general international disarmament.
2. The events of the last few months make it clear that, even if the Governments of certain countries were seriously contemplating the possibility of disarming, they doubtless would not be in a position to present, with any hope of success, proposals to this effect to their parliaments for ratification.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the undoubted truth, however, of the last assertion, which amounted to the statement that public opinion no longer supported the idea of disarming, it is interesting to note that the German Government in going to the people for a vote stressed two things above all others. First of all, it said that the demand for equality had been made in the interests of German security, for without equality in armament Germany lay helpless before any nation that might seek to attack her. In the second place, and even more prominent, was the insistence that Germany wanted peace.

This latter cry had its uses not only at home, but also abroad, because there was just enough sincerity behind it to lead many in Great Britain and France to believe that it was a true expres-

<sup>2</sup> *Documents on International Affairs, 1933*, pp. 328-29.

sion of the Government's aims. After all, it was felt, the author of *Mein Kampf* had now come to power and was experiencing the sobering effects of responsibility. Perhaps, despite the savagery of his attacks upon Jews and political opponents within Germany and his record with respect to Austria, he was conscious of the frightful costs of war, as he said he was. Perhaps there were no issues upon which some kind of peaceful and satisfactory settlement could not be made. It was clear that henceforth Germany could not be treated as an inferior and unequal power. As regards armament, the question now was: How much rearmament should Germany be permitted? Great Britain wanted to face this issue and attempt to settle it by treaty. But to the French, armament was still but part of the broader question which now became for them almost the sole question: How to maintain security in the face of resurgent Germany? The question became the more crucial as internal strife and crisis in 1934 began to weaken French power.

In 1933, Germany, under Nazi leadership, had begun to reassert herself, very slowly and cautiously, following the general lines laid down in 1932 by Bruening, von Papen, and Schleicher. But with his first 'Saturday Surprise' of October 14, Adolf Hitler began brusquer tactics and hastened the tempo of the German international comeback. Although he was to meet with defeat in his early attempts to win Austria, he was able by 1935 to throw off altogether the restrictions of Versailles on armament.



## CHAPTER THREE

### GERMANY RESURGENT

FROM the moment Germany left the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations on October 14, 1933, European international relations entered upon a new phase. It soon became obvious that nobody was going to apply sanctions or wage a preventive war to stop Germany from rearming. This situation then brought up for the first time the question of 'appeasement' (though that term was not in general use till much later) versus opposition to German demands. Few realized at the time how significant the outcome of the armament question was to be. Hitler's great task was to strengthen Germany by achieving parity in arms and at the same time to keep Germany free from commitments that would hamper her future action, even though he had indicated plainly in *Mein Kampf*, and subsequent events proved that he followed his own philosophy, that any obligation undertaken to achieve immediate ends would be broken when no longer convenient. Had Hitler failed in his rearmament program, his régime might well have ended, in view of the domestic difficulties he encountered in the spring of 1934. Since he succeeded, he was in a position to take the next step in building up an invincible Germany.

#### 1. *The League, the Powers, and Germany*

A brief review of the policies and outlook of the Great Powers suggests that Germany was in a far more favorable position after October 14, 1933, than was generally surmised at the time. First of all, the League of Nations, its prestige lowered because of its dilatory and ineffectual handling of the Manchurian crisis and the Chaco and Liticia disputes, received additional blows in the Four-Power Pact and Germany's withdrawal from membership. That the League was coming to be regarded as ineffectual in settling disputes among Great Powers was indicated by the Italian attitude toward it. The Fascist Grand Council on December 5 passed a resolution making Italy's further partici-

pation in the League 'dependent on radical changes in that organization' at the earliest moment. Italy's stand created a flurry of comment and criticism. France and the lesser states of Europe, quick to sense a revisionist motive behind the Italian attitude, defended the existing structure and thus compelled Mussolini to withdraw his demands and threats. But the public was disquieted by the obvious Italian trend toward friendship with Germany and Japan, while critics and cartoonists insinuated that the League was dead. Pessimism was premature, as later events proved, but the atmosphere was nonetheless conducive to the type of bilateral negotiation of armament and security problems that abetted Hitler's plan to play his opponents against each other.

With respect to the British policy, much has been made of the fact that the only translation of *Mein Kampf* available to the English was an expurgated edition (*My Struggle*, October 1933). In that translation, which ran through ten editions in four months, the omissions did not conceal Hitler's key ideas and aims. What they did do was to eliminate much of the repetition of the original German work and thereby to weaken the cumulative effect of Hitler's constant reiteration of calculated duplicity and inhumanity, of his vaunted belief in such concepts as blood and soil, might makes right, the sword is the only weapon for a struggling and expanding nation such as Germany, the end justifies the means. Hitler's elaborations and illustrations were often cut in such a way as to remove the overwhelming conviction they carry of a fanatic determined to pursue his goal — the creation of a master German race capable of dominating the world — untiringly and unscrupulously.

Misunderstanding of Hitler's motives and aims, however, was not the only reason for British support of a conciliatory policy toward the National Socialist régime. Among other widely divergent causes was the pacifist sentiment which, by hampering rearmament, prevented the adoption of a policy of resisting Germany. The Liberals who favored appeasement undoubtedly looked upon the Nazi Government as a retribution for the injustices of the Versailles Treaty which should be rectified even though democratic Germany had been replaced by a monstrous and inhuman administration. The Conservatives and Tories, having investments in Germany or fearing Bolshevism, were motivated less by pangs of conscience than by a short-sighted belief that Hitler in *Mein Kampf* and in public speeches had committed

himself to the destruction of Communist Russia. Communism in Russia only intensified the Conservatives' traditional fear of that country as a threat to India and the routes thereto. From imperialistic motives Conservatives were ever partial to Germany whether Bismarckian, democratic, or Nazi, and distrustful of Russia, whether Tsarist or Communist. Furthermore, Hitler's repeated statements that pre-war Germany had erred in attempting to expand her navy and colonies *before* she had secured for herself the needed *Lebensraum* in Eastern Europe deceived many British. They failed to grasp the implication that such things as colonies might come *after* Germany had become the dominant Power in Europe. Finally, the English friends of National Socialism failed utterly to comprehend that Hitler, his motives, and methods were phenomena completely unknown to British life. While being comforted by the thought that the Fuehrer like their own radicals would, in time, be mellowed by power and responsibility, they were unable to believe that Hitler, having won the allegiance of the masses, would continue to rely upon brute force and a propaganda of falsehood and hatred.

The British Government, dominated by Conservatives and with Ramsay MacDonald, the first 'appeaser,' at its head, tried a policy in 1934 of teetering between Germany and France, of oscillating between isolationism and internationalism. This amounted to backing the German demand for equality in armament to be attained by Germany's building upward — while at the same time helping the French obtain security, not through the offices of the League, but by the creation of regional security pacts guaranteed by the Great Powers. British Labor failed to check this essentially anti-League strategy which had already been foreshadowed in the Locarno and Four-Power Pacts. Lacking capable leadership, leaning toward revisionism, disunited, it failed to make its views effective because, with its anti-war sentiments, it refused to face the ultimate necessity of using force even in the interests of a just policy. Only a coalition between the Liberals and Labor could have restrained the 'traditionalist' Conservative Government, but no such fusion was possible. The totalitarian Powers saw in this situation those signs of weakness which they so frequently attributed to democracy.

At the same time, France in her own way was drifting toward the same course as that being pursued across the Channel. By the autumn of 1933, the French political crisis, which reached its peak in February 1934, was rapidly approaching. The Gov-

ernment's support had become shaky by mid-October because the Chamber of Deputies was split over the policy to be followed in the face of shrinking income and worsening economic conditions. Popular uneasiness at mounting deficits, threats of deflation, dwindling foreign trade, rising unemployment, and agrarian difficulties found vent in restlessness, suspicion of parliamentary ineptitude, and lack of faith in the Government. If for no other reasons than these France was weak, in contrast with her strong position of 1930-31, and consequently could not pursue a vigorous foreign policy.

Since there was little real confidence in the League of Nations, the French discussed the possibility of a 'preventive war,' as the only alternative to that of permitting Germany to rearm. It has been rumored that Baldwin persuaded the French Government that if it would not open hostilities, England would back its point of view at the Disarmament Conference. After October 14, when Germany withdrew from the League and the Conference, there were other considerations besides the British attitude. A preventive war would be a big risk with little assurance of a return. The Ruhr adventure ten years before, which had not turned out too well, had brought down upon France's head the hostile public opinion of the world. Then, too, the French Government could not ignore the popular hatred of any kind of war and the prevalence of an optimistic view that the crisis would pass somehow. Moreover, as in England, there were Right-Wing groups that believed it possible to make a deal with Germany. Of these groups the most frequently mentioned were steel men and financiers, often with interests in Germany through the ramifications of international cartels and banking. They saw an advantage in encouraging similarly conservative elements in Germany to hope that equality could be gained without resorting to the tactics of radical National Socialism. Such a course might have the further advantage of keeping Germany and Italy apart, thus enabling France to settle old scores with Mussolini.

Yet another alternative to preventive war was advocated in France by Radical Socialists and Communists. Most prominent among them was former Premier Herriot who, returning from a tour of the Near East and Russia in September 1933, pressed the Government to develop relations with the Soviet as the only hope of establishing security now that Germany was obviously arming and refusing to continue the Disarmament Conference. It will be remembered that Herriot's Government had signed

the non-aggression pact of December 1932 with Russia at the same time that it had consented to German equality of armament in a system of security. It seemed logical, now that France was uncertain of British, Italian, and American support for pressing the proposals of October 14, to turn to the East for help in redressing the balance against Germany. But while they began negotiations with Russia, Premier Daladier and his Foreign Minister, Paul-Boncour, were willing to go no further toward rapprochement with the U.S.S.R. than the negotiation of a commercial agreement which was finally signed on January 11, 1934, to the disgust of the politicians on the Right.

Appreciating the situation created by doubt and divided counsels, Germany shrewdly played up to the appeasers. Both von Papen, hoping with the support of the industrialists to control German politics, and Hitler, with the advice of his Nazi Party adviser Rosenberg, wooed the pro-German groups in France and England. Of great value in Britain was Schacht's friendship with Montague Norman, head of the Bank of England, and visits of the romantic but gracious Hanfstaengl, who tried to persuade conservative society that Hitler, contrary to the lament of the Jews, was really quite a decent fellow because he was giving the German people, and especially the youth, an ideal to live up to. In France, besides similar contacts, the Nazis began to influence the press by the traditional method of subsidization familiar to students of pre-1914 diplomacy.

An especially significant example of Hitler's tactics was the interview with him which Fernand de Brinon, an organizer of the Comité France-Allemagne, published in *Le Matin* on November 17, 1933. Hitler, speaking with the assurance which his victory in the plebiscite of November 12 lent him, declared that there was only one outstanding question between Germany and France: the Saar. When that was settled there was nothing to prevent friendship. He repudiated the idea that he wanted war. There was no question in Europe worth a war and, he indicated, already Poland appreciated that. Although he would stay out of the League, which was only an international parliament where differences were accentuated, he would negotiate on the basis of absolute equality in principle, but equality of armament by stages as a matter of practice. Nothing could have been sweeter than these assurances, including as they did the acceptance of the British plan for gradual accomplishment of arms equality.

Meanwhile, at Geneva, Henderson, who had been attempting

to salvage the Disarmament Conference, became so discouraged that he threatened to resign unless the nations showed greater determination to make progress. This they did by going forward in retreat between November 18 and 21, when it was agreed among the British, Italian, French, American, and other members of the Bureau to postpone a meeting of the general Conference until some time in January and to sanction 'parallel and supplementary effort' among the states to advance by 'diplomatic machinery' the work of the Conference. In other words, Great Britain and Italy, who through speeches of Simon, Baldwin, and Mussolini plainly indicated that they were prepared to treat cordially with Germany, had accepted the German proposal of bilateral negotiations. Since Paul-Boncour had already indicated that he would not refuse, the way was open for acceptance of Hitler's friendly gestures at their face value.

The French Ambassador in Berlin, François-Poncet, who was regarded by radicals as a spokesman for the Comité des Forges, the great French steel trust, inaugurated the formal discussions with Hitler. Just what passed between them is not known definitely, although it was rumored at one time that Hitler was offering France an alliance, and at another time that a French proposal for disarmament was cancelled by the German Economic Council because it would cut orders of heavy industry. The published documents — German notes of December 18, 1933, and January 19, 1934, and a French communication of January 11 — revealed that the views of both countries on such matters as the size of the German army, its equipment, and the problem of supervision were virtually the same as they were in October. Among Germany's new proposals was that of ten-year non-aggression pacts with France, Poland, and all of Germany's neighbors, and that of the immediate 'restoration' of the Saar territory to Germany without a plebiscite. Paralleling the Franco-German negotiations there were exchanges of views between Great Britain and Italy and between these two and Germany which were interpreted as indicating an agreement among the three and the isolation of France. Whether the French were fearful of such a Three-Power combination or had a feeling that developments in Eastern Europe would rob their country of support against Germany, they decided to abandon bilateral negotiations and to insist upon discussion by all members of the Disarmament Conference. Thus a deadlock was reached upon the method of procedure as well as upon the contents of an agree-

ment. Two events then occurred which altered the general situation profoundly: the German-Polish non-aggression pact of January 26, and the crisis in France of February 6-12.

## *2. The German-Polish Pact*

There had scarcely been 'sorer' spots in Europe arising from the World War peace settlement than Danzig, the Polish Corridor, and Upper Silesia. For years Germany and Poland had exchanged recriminations and verbally fought over such questions as the treatment of minorities, German rights of transit between East and West Prussia, and the status of Danzig. What made matters worse was the condescension which the Germans felt toward the Poles, whom they regarded as culturally inferior, and the exorbitant nationalism of the Poles, who matched German snobbishness with Polish pride. Looked at from any impartial point of view, the Polish boundaries were among the worst of the peace-making compromises. They not only disappointed the Poles and increased their indignation at the Germans which had smouldered since the days of Bismarck, but also created in the Reich a feeling of great injustice.

Though the chief issues could be boiled down to unjust treatment of minorities and the economic difficulties created by the dissection of the Silesian mining and industrial region and the separation of East Prussia from the Reich, there were other less tangible factors involved in the German-Polish disputes. From the Polish angle, there was the problem of preventing a combination of Germany and Soviet Russia which would place her in a vise. This danger was very real from the moment in 1922 when Germany and the Soviet inaugurated a friendship at Rapallo which lasted for ten years. Attempting to meet this threat, Poland concluded a defensive alliance with Rumania assuring her of aid in case of a Russian attack, and one with France to restrain Germany. Despite a lessening of tension in German-Polish relations as a result of the Locarno Pacts which provided that disputes between them should be settled only by peaceful means, Germany's championship of minorities after her admission to the League in 1926, and the Polish threat to the economic life of Danzig through the development of a port at Gdynia, kept relations cool. As National Socialism became more deeply entrenched in the Reich, Polish apprehensions naturally increased, tending to center around Danzig and East Prussia where the

Nazi movement was particularly active. Rumors spread in 1932 that the Nazis intended to renounce the League jurisdiction and annex Danzig to the Reich, and that Poland was planning to seize the city. Amid these flurries Poland officially maintained a policy of balancing between the Soviet Union and Germany. In July, the Polish Government concluded a pact of non-aggression with Russia and ratified it on November 23. As a counterpoise, the Poles negotiated agreements tending toward better relations with Danzig in August 1932. Furthermore, after Beck had succeeded Zaleski as Polish Foreign Minister, the semi-official *Gazeta Polska* suggested on November 19 that Poland would gladly conclude a non-aggression pact with Germany.

On the German side, while there existed a similar problem of counterbalancing the French-Polish alliance, there were evidences in 1932 of a desire for better relations with Poland. The von Papen Government, however, was too shaky to effect them, and von Schleicher, who was reported to be desirous of contacts with Pilsudski, had too little time. Whatever hopes there may have been of rapprochement seemed blasted by the advent of Hitler, for in view of the liveliness of Nazi agitation over Danzig, the Corridor, and Upper Silesia, there was every reason to expect that Poland might be one of the first victims of Nazi revisionism.

How was Poland to protect herself? It is alleged that Pilsudski, who was credited with being among the first to realize that Hitlerism was not a passing freak of politics, first turned to France and suggested a preventive war. If he did so, the French not only refused to consider it, but also aroused Polish suspicion and resentment by entering into negotiations for the Four-Power Pact proposed by Mussolini, thus seemingly turning their backs upon their friends in the East and excluding them from the circle of Great Powers. As an alternative to France there was Soviet Russia. The Poles, and particularly Marshal Pilsudski, however, were too conscious of past conflicts and too fearful of Communism and Pan-Slavism to throw in their lot with the U.S.S.R. Moreover, such a policy might turn Poland into a battle-ground in the not improbable event of a Russo-German conflict. As for a Central European Bloc, Poland's conflict with Czechoslovakia over Teschen had left a legacy of ill-feeling that prevented any solid combination there.

In the circumstances, Poland decided to take a strong line with Germany in the hope of coming to good terms with her while the military strength of the Germans was yet weak. Foreign



Minister Beck, generally regarded as Pilsudski's mouthpiece, warned Germany in a speech before the Sejm on February 15, 1933, that the Polish attitude toward Germany would be that of Germany toward Poland. Then on March 6, the day after the elections in Germany which confirmed the Nazi-Nationalist coalition in power, Poland augmented the garrison at the Westerplatte, an ammunition dump in Danzig Harbor which had been granted to Poland in 1921. The alleged reason for this move was the existence of a Nazi plot to seize the depot, but since the previous consent of the League High Commissioner in Danzig was necessary to make such a move by Poland legal, the Danzig Senate had a good case for protesting to the League Council, which compelled Poland to withdraw the extra guards. Whether or not a real danger of Nazi action either against the Westerplatte or the *status quo* of Danzig existed, the Poles felt that they had impressed Germany with their show of force.

In addition, Polish and other journalists assert that Pilsudski, when he discovered that France would not back him in a preventive war on Germany, issued a kind of ultimatum to Hitler demanding to know whether, in connection with Nazi agitation in Danzig, he meant war or peace; and that Hitler, realizing the weakness of his position, capitulated.

Even without this tale, it is clear that Hitler in these early months had to walk warily while he consolidated his régime. After April — when, incidentally, the Poles as well as many other people began to boycott German goods and to develop other forms of anti-German agitation — he loudly proclaimed his desire for peace on all sides. One of the first results of this policy were the declarations on May 3 and 4 by Hitler and Beck of a pledge to adhere to the existing treaties and of a desire for dispassionate investigation and treatment of matters of common interest. Hitler emphasized his desire for better relations with Poland in his speech of May 17, 1933, that did so much to relieve the tension at the Disarmament Conference. He repudiated any idea of making 'Germans out of Poles and Frenchmen,' and indicated that, while he felt that thoughtful treatment when the Versailles Treaty was drawn up could have 'found a settlement in the East which would have met both the reasonable claims of Poland and the natural rights of Germany,' he had no intention of breaking any agreement which could not be removed 'without being replaced by a better one.'

These early Polish and German maneuvers were primarily

connected with the problem of Danzig which still remained an issue between them. The elections there of May 28, 1933, gave the National Socialists a majority in the Volkstag, the representative assembly which controlled the city government, and resulted in the installation of Dr. Rauschning, leader of the Nazi Party in Danzig, as chief executive. Before this success and in line with the conciliatory policy already adopted, both Hitler and Rauschning pledged their loyalty to existing treaties and institutions. This attitude made possible further negotiations between Danzig and Poland, resulting in agreements, signed on August 5, by which Poland promised to Danzig parity with the Polish port of Gdynia, whose development was threatening the prosperity of the German city, in return for guarantees to the Polish minority in Danzig. Furthermore, both parties agreed that disputes between them would be settled through direct negotiations rather than through recourse to the League of Nations. These arrangements not only aided the Danzig Nazis in their efforts to establish a totalitarian régime within the city, but also removed one of the major problems in German-Polish relations.

Meanwhile, Poland pondered other moves on the diplomatic chessboard. A visit of Beck to Paris in September restored at least the appearance of Franco-Polish friendship, though not the former spirit of cordial collaboration, for Poland was now anxious to prove herself no mere French satellite. In contrast, Polish relations with Russia were greatly improved after May, when the brilliant Russian journalist, Karl Radek, published a series of articles in *Izvestia* to prove that the U.S.S.R. had joined the *status-quo* Powers in opposition to revisionism. Later Radek visited Warsaw and the Polish Corridor; Pilsudski's prison records under the Tsarist régime were brought to Warsaw; papers left by Lenin when he fled from Cracow in 1914 were presented to the Lenin Institute; chiefs of the air staffs exchanged visits in the summer and autumn; and Polish and Russian journalists entertained one another. The only official act of significance was the signature on July 3 of the pact defining non-aggression and its ratification by both Poland and Russia in a remarkably short time on September 15. Indeed, Robert Machray, an authority on Poland and Eastern Europe, testified after visiting the region in the late summer that 'the "Anti-Soviet" barrier' was 'down.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robert Machray, 'Nazi Threat to Eastern Europe,' *Current History*, XXXIX (December 1933), 302-08.

This cordial atmosphere in the East did not mean, however, that Poland intended to refuse German overtures. On the contrary, Poland was embarking upon that policy of balance between opposing forces which she pursued until 1939.

The German Government, more in need than ever of Polish friendship after the withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference and the League on October 14, gauged the Polish attitude correctly and began to work toward a rapprochement by opening discussion over the problem of an eight-year-old tariff war. Such prominent Nazis as Hanfstaengl, confidant of Hitler, and Sieburg, of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, reputedly a friend of both Goering and Goebbels, visited Warsaw in November. The upshot of the official and unofficial efforts was the announcement on November 15 that the two Governments had agreed to begin direct negotiations over outstanding issues and 'to renounce any resort to force in their mutual relations.' While Hitler's Government did not intend by this or the subsequent negotiations to recognize Germany's Polish frontiers as permanent, it interpreted this virtual non-aggression pact as forming a basis for 'the solution of all problems, i.e. also territorial problems,' and pressed for the signature of a formal document.

Yet Poland hesitated to sign on the dotted line. Fundamentally the Poles entertained a genuine and deeply rooted suspicion of Germany which had its beginning long before Hitler's time. Now the Fuehrer's offers of non-aggression pacts, not only to Poland but also to France and to Czechoslovakia, were obviously intended as part of his efforts to obtain an enlarged and fully equipped army. Could Poland hope to cope with the situation once Germany had become strong again? Would it not be better to line up with a French-Soviet group of which there was talk in Paris and Moscow? In Poland, as elsewhere in Europe, the answers were given, not by the 'Leftists' who tended to look toward the Soviet Union, but by the aristocratic and conservative circles of the Right which were later included in Goering's well-known hunting parties and which always felt a closer affinity with Berlin than with Moscow. Moreover, Marshal Pilsudski, however much or little he may have been influenced by ideological considerations and by personal hatred of Russia, was fully convinced that he could not rely upon France to fight the Reich. He apparently had no idea of breaking the French alliance, but believed that Poland could better play the balancing policy imposed upon her by geography if she accepted the offer of friendly relations with Germany.

Accordingly, after some difficulty over wording, the German-Polish Pact was signed on January 26, 1934, and ratified on February 24. This made more explicit and formal the declaration of November and stated that a new era was to be inaugurated in the mutual relations of Poland and Germany. Existing international obligations of both parties were safeguarded as were those 'problems which, in accordance with international law, should be regarded exclusively as internal affairs of either state,' a carefully worded clause which the Germans finally accepted because they thought that it did not remove minority questions from discussion. Basing their relations on the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the signatories renounced force and promised to settle differences by direct negotiations or pacific methods already in existence (apparently referring to the Arbitration Convention signed at Locarno) upon the basis of a 'just and equitable consideration of the interests of both parties.' The pact was to remain in force for ten years and thereafter to be renewed automatically unless denounced by a six-months notice. A few days after the pact was signed, a 'propaganda alliance' was concluded by which the two Powers promised to 'cooperate on all questions in forming public opinion in their respective countries to the end that mutual understanding may be increasingly awakened and that a friendly atmosphere may thereby be assured.' On March 7 the customs war was ended by a protocol which removed restrictions and prohibitions that had piled up on both sides since June 1925. Later in the year both Powers raised their ministries to the status of embassies.

In view of the history of Polish-German relations, the rapprochement represented by this series of agreements came as a surprise to the rest of Europe. As Walter Duranty wrote of the non-aggression pact, the fact that Poland had guaranteed her western frontier for a term of years 'without the aid of France rocked the Chancelleries of Europe.'<sup>2</sup> It was assumed in some quarters that there must be secret agreements, perhaps directed against Russia, or perchance adumbrating an Eastern European economic bloc on lines laid down in the 1918 Treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest that represented a high-water mark in Pan-German aspirations. But in reality the situation was much simpler than that.

Germany, thus freed from danger of attack by Poland, and with the latter a bulwark between herself and Russia, gained

<sup>2</sup> Walter Duranty, *Europe: War or Peace* (New York, 1935), p. 27.

precious time in which to concentrate upon such more immediate concerns as rearmament and Austria. Furthermore, Hitler had struck a blow at the solidarity of the French alliance system and, even more important, had created an excellent propaganda weapon in his effort to convince Europe that he wanted peace. To make friends with post-war Germany's bitterest enemy was in itself a noteworthy achievement. But Hitler drove the lesson home, declaring to a representative of the *Gazeta Polska* that the race theory of National Socialism absolutely prohibited any 'forceful annexation of foreign peoples,' and that the 'policy of respecting the foreign peoples living on our borders corresponds in the highest degree to the ideology of our movement and therefore to our innermost convictions.' He repeated this idea in his Reichstag speech of January 30 and further asserted that Germans and Poles had to 'reconcile themselves to the fact of each other's existence.' Differences between peoples could not be settled properly by war which would have 'disastrous effects' out of all proportion to the gains. But, as he had felt called upon to demonstrate, they could be dealt with 'by means of a frank and open conversation between the two parties, . . .' One can imagine the conservatives of England and France nodding assent and saying, 'A sensible fellow. No need of this collective security balderdash. Eh, what?'

If there were any unrecorded or secret agreements, however, subsequent events would suggest that at most Poland had promised to acquiesce in the Nazification of Danzig which proceeded apace in the following months, and that Poland's spokesmen were correct when, from Beck to business men and journalists, they iterated and reiterated Poland's aim of securing her independence and integrity. For the time being, this objective was achieved. Poland, relieved from the pressure of German revisionism, was able to consolidate her hold upon former German provinces, much to the annoyance of the German consular agents whose silence was necessitated by the official policy of rapprochement. Poland at once became recognized as a Great Power, not merely a French satellite. The Polish Government realized to a certain extent, however, that the pact meant nothing ultimately unless Poland could maintain military superiority over Germany (an impossibility) or could retain the support of other Powers. Thus, the old policy of balancing between Russia and Germany and of making alliances with France and Rumania was continued. Foreign Minister Beck hastened to Moscow in the middle

of February in order to allay suspicions of an anti-Soviet plot and to begin the discussion of such matters as Communist propaganda in Poland, economic relations, and the renewal of the 1932 non-aggression pact which was to expire in 1935. A protocol prolonging the pact for ten years was signed on May 5 and ratified on June 16. The round of visits begun in 1933 was continued and included an exchange of courtesies between the Polish and Soviet fleets and air forces. Finally, Poland, although she did not welcome it, did not block the admission of the U.S.S.R. to the League of Nations in September.

Despite everything Beck could say, however, about loyalty to the alliance with France, the old confidence and cordiality were now gone. When Paul-Boncour 'rejoiced' at the signature of the German-Polish Pact, he fooled no one as to the fundamental change which had inevitably occurred. Henceforth, it was France who was the suitor and Poland the pursued. More than that, even though the alliance was maintained and even though Poland remained in the League of Nations, she had, by virtue of the pact with Germany, rejected the method of collective security for that of bilateral agreements. Thus, after January 26, 1934, Poland stood with a leg in each of the opposing European camps. This position gave her bargaining strength, because no one was ever quite certain toward which side she might lean in any given issue, but in the end it proved fatal, when rearmcd Germany completely smashed the system which Poland had helped to crack by her own action.

### *3. Crisis in France*

The German-Polish Pact might not have made France so uneasy if she herself had been strong and had been sure of British support. By the end of January 1934, in addition to unrest over the economic and political difficulties already apparent in 1933, France was experiencing discouragement and bewilderment arising from a 'growing feeling of isolation' in the face of an increasing German menace. Aggravating every situation was the widening gap between Left and Right, not only over internal but also external policies. The Left, desirous of safeguarding the republican form of government at home and of meeting economic and social problems by a program of 'social justice' that would not only give the lower classes greater economic security, but also curb the economic and political power of the

wealthier groups, believed in the League of Nations and in continued efforts at international cooperation. The Right, now clearly Fascistic in its nationalism and its demands for that 'authority' and 'order' proclaimed by such groups as de la Rocque's *Croix de Feu* and by the *Action Française*, ridiculed Paul-Boncour and his febrile pursuit of pacifism and internationalism. Both were right and both were wrong. The same fatal unwillingness to back justice with force was evident among the French Left as in the British Labor Party; the same tendency to come to terms with Nazism and Fascism was observable on the French Right as among British Tories.

Both the Stavisky scandal, which was only the best known of the many revelations of corruption in high places and in the press, and the continued failure of the Government to balance the budget blew the lid off the seething political pot on February 6. On that day street demonstrations, which had been increasing in frequency and violence for a month, turned into genuine rioting when various elements of Rightist and Fascist tendencies joined in a march on the Chamber of Deputies. They were stopped by a rain of bullets from the gendarmes and guards, who claimed that they had been fired upon first by the crowd. At least fifteen guards and rioters were killed and over thirteen hundred injured. Since the Socialists and Communists on the extreme Left were genuinely alarmed over what they believed to be a 'Fascist menace,' they proceeded to stage a series of counter-demonstrations between February 7 and 12, culminating in a twenty-four-hour general strike. This last action constituted the first step toward the future Popular Front, for the two parties that had been bitterly opposed to one another united to warn the 'Fascists' against interference with democratic liberties and privileges.<sup>3</sup>

The political changes which followed the rioting and demonstrations failed to satisfy either the Left or the Right. Premier Daladier resigned on February 7 with his political future apparently ruined by the allegation that he had ordered the guards to fire upon fellow Frenchmen. On February 9, the highly respectable, seventy-one-year-old former President Doumergue was called from retirement to head a Government in which all parties except the Socialists and Communists were represented. The Cabinet of 'national union,' with such former and future

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Werth, *France in Ferment* (London and New York, n.d.), gives the best single account of the background, events, and results of the February crisis.

Premiers as Herriot, Tardieu, Barthou, Sarraut, and Flandin, tried to call a truce in political squabbles and to put finances on a healthy basis, but it failed to resolve any of the fundamental issues beneath the surface of political turmoil. It did little, for example, to stop the Fascistic movements which gained strength throughout the year. Indeed, Doumergue was strongly suspected of close relations with de la Rocque and his *Croix de Feu* which reached the height of its power at this time and, according to rumor, was receiving arms for its members from Germany. This situation resulted in the second step toward the Popular Front when the Socialists and Communists, after four months of negotiation, concluded a pact on July 27 to wage a campaign jointly in opposition to Fascism, in favor of disarmament, and in defense of democratic liberties. When the Radical Socialists, a Center party despite the name, joined this combination a year later, the Popular Front was completed.

The tragedy of the February crisis lay not merely in its weakening of French influence at a particularly critical period in European international affairs, but even more in its legacy of a divided nation. Like the revolution of 1830, this one stopped halfway. The Third Republic, in contrast to Austria during the very same days and Germany a year earlier, was saved from Fascism. On the other hand, the 'revolt of the masses,' who demanded an economic and a social 'New Deal,' fell short of its mark. France was consequently halted at a fork in the road, with the Right trying to push one way, the Left to advance in another, and each just powerful enough to block the other's path. Thus, one cause of the French defeat in June 1940 can be traced to the domestic situation in 1934.

Doumergue's Government, however, was more successful in the conduct of foreign affairs than in solving domestic problems. A directorate comprising the Premier, Tardieu, Herriot, and Foreign Minister Barthou was set up to handle foreign relations. There was little doubt that under the auspices of such men France would stiffen toward Germany and strengthen her defensive alliances. Doumergue had been known before the war as a big army man; Tardieu had been Clemenceau's right-hand man at the Peace Conference and had displayed an intransigent attitude on the questions of security and debts in 1930-32; and Barthou, identified with the Poincaré school of extreme nationalism, was the last of the pre-1914 school of politicians to hold the post of Foreign Minister. He had begun his career as



a Cabinet member in 1894, the first year of the Franco-Russian alliance, had been Premier in 1913 when the three-year service law was passed, and had helped as Minister of War in 1921 to conclude the Franco-Polish Alliance.

Barthou faced a difficult situation both at home and abroad. The Left, with a blind devotion to ideals, insisted upon disarmament and, with more reason, a strengthening of the League and every agency of collective security. The Right counseled economic and political rapprochement with Germany, a policy likewise favored by many liberals of the Center. The French alliance system was cracking up and the attitude of Great Britain and Italy was not yet clear. Soviet Russia, whose shift from the revisionist to the *status-quo* camp and from world revolution to cooperation with democracy was too recent and dubious to inspire confidence, likewise presented an enigma. Barthou, however, had the advantage over his predecessor, Paul-Boncour, in that he was more frankly realistic, more outspoken, and more flexible in his methods of pursuing his fixed goal — that of achieving security for France.

Realizing full well the situation, although like most contemporaries erroneously assuming that the Hitler régime would soon collapse, Barthou set about the task of resurrecting the loyalty of France's former allies and winning new ones. If Italy were to be drawn closer, the long Italo-Yugoslav feud would have to be brought to an end; if the Soviet were courted there would be the risk of driving Poland completely out of the French camp and perhaps disturbing friendly Rumania and even Great Britain. In any event, Barthou had to operate within the framework of the League system to which everyone still gave lip service. There is no doubt that he intended, in case his efforts to conclude pacts compatible with the League Covenant failed, to revert frankly to the pre-1914 system of military alliances directed against Germany, the menace of whose rearmament he clearly recognized. In fact, he had to settle this question of armament or disarmament one way or another before he could make much progress in other directions.

#### 4. *Rearmament, Not Disarmament*

In picking up the negotiations with Germany where his predecessor had left them, Barthou adopted a stiff attitude toward the last German note even though Hitler had declared on January 30

that in seeking equality he had no thought of menacing France and that his régime was 'ready to do everything to prove it.' Barthou stated his views in a memorandum of February 14: France 'in a sincere and straight-forward spirit' had put forth a program in conformity with the resolutions previously voted at the Disarmament Conference when the German delegation was still there; Germany had not only not modified her proposals of December 18, but had not answered France's 'courteous request' to explain several of her points. In a similar vein Barthou went on to criticize the German demands and contentions. Without closing the door completely to further discussion, he insisted that there should be no misunderstanding in the attempt to reach an agreement and that it was for 'the German Government to dissipate or prevent it by explanations which they may be sure will be examined justly and without prejudice.' The German reply of March 13, however, gave Barthou no more satisfaction than previous notes had given to his predecessors.

Meanwhile, both Great Britain and Italy, after consultation with Germany and with one another, had put forth proposals for a compromise between Germany and France in notes of January 29 and 31. Italy was obviously more inclined to take a gloomy view of the situation and to lean more toward the German side than was Great Britain, who adhered in the main to her plan of 1933, but suggested a pact of consultation in connection with any disarmament convention and insisted that Germany should return to the League. After Barthou's stiff note of February 14 and an indication of American support for all the British suggestions except that of a consultation pact, upon which the United States reserved its attitude, the British Government renewed its efforts to effect a compromise. It sent Anthony Eden, Sir John Simon's second at the Foreign Office, who at this time stepped into the spotlight as the British knight-errant in defense of lost causes, on a round of visits to Paris, Berlin, and Rome. Paris told him nothing, on the grounds that the Government had not had time since the internal crisis to study the British memorandum of January 29. Berlin told him nothing new, and Rome grudgingly promised support of Great Britain if the others did so, although a fortnight later Mussolini plainly showed which way he thought things were drifting when he publicly declared that Germany should arm if the rest of the world failed to disarm.

Another disturbing element appeared on the international

stage when the Belgian Prime Minister made an ambiguous statement on March 6 which was interpreted in many quarters as an indication that France's formerly staunch ally was not in agreement with her on the matter of armament. The Foreign Minister hastened to correct that impression two days later, declaring that there was complete harmony of views between his country and France, and that both were in accord with Great Britain and Italy in wishing to limit German armaments. Despite this statement and a communiqué to the same effect following the visit of Barthou to Brussels on March 27, there is little doubt that Belgium was already beginning to drift away from her policy of cooperation with France toward that of strict neutrality which was to be adopted three years later.

Since British efforts at conciliation had failed, and the outlook for France was more dubious than ever, Barthou's reply of March 19 to the British memorandum again stressed the need for security. It gave figures and dates concerning French reduction of armament. No less clearly, though without specific data, it pointed to German rearmament and to the experience of recent years which had taught 'that every new concession leads to a new demand or to a new violation of the Treaties.' Moreover, it stated that the whole problem of limiting armament was at bottom a question of guarantees of execution and that in the end it led back to the League of Nations, 'the only organization capable of furnishing a collective guarantee of peace.' Finally, it declared that France could accept no further disarmament for herself 'while granting on the other hand to Germany an immediate legalization, which could only be limited with difficulty, of a rearmament already realized in violation of the Treaties.' In effect, France was saying that she did not trust the Germans and that there could be no further talk about disarmament until she was sure that sanctions against further violations of treaties would be forthcoming.

Since Great Britain took the cue and began discussing a new 'guarantee of execution' of a future disarmament convention, it looked for a few days as if an eventual agreement might be reached by which at long last France would be assured of security and Germany of equality. But because the latter aim was now admittedly a question of German rearmament, and because members of the French Government, especially Herriot and Tardieu, were distrustful of British constancy and uncertain that any system could be devised to control German rearmament

effectively, Barthou in a note of April 17 put an end to all bilateral discussions. He declared that the Disarmament Conference should now resume its work 'at the point at which the Conference left it when it invited Governments to proceed to an exchange of views outside the conference, which have not yet produced a result.' Whether this action, much criticized at the time and recalled by Germany a year later as the real cause of failure to bring about an agreement, was too hasty or not, it cleared the way for the reopening of the Disarmament Conference which many of the smaller European nations, who had been ignored in the Great Power negotiations, were demanding.

The reason stated in the French memorandum for ending all discussion was the great increase in the German budget provisions for army, navy, and air forces. Figures announced at the end of March for the fiscal year of 1934-35 indicated that Germany intended to increase expenditures by nearly fifty per cent over those of the previous year. When asked by Great Britain and France what these figures meant, she replied that the increase for the navy was caused by the necessity of replacing obsolete units; that the funds for the Air Ministry, which could not be regarded as 'an armament budget,' were to be devoted to 'air transport' and 'air protection'; and that the appropriations for the military forces were to cover preparations for converting the *Reichswehr* into a short-term army.

Ominous as these figures were to the French, they but reflected the general trend among all the Powers, for the armament race was already beginning. A new defense program calling for an expenditure of some three billion francs, to be raised by an extraordinary credit, was laid before the French Chamber in March and passed in June. This was the more significant because the Doumergue Government was trying to cut expenses wherever possible. Furthermore, in March, both Great Britain and the United States voted to build up their navies to treaty strength, and on May 26, Mussolini announced his intention to do likewise. In July, Italy appropriated more than a billion lire for the modernization of its air forces. Indeed, a survey at the end of the summer of 1934 showed that every Great Power except Germany was openly spending more for military purposes than before 1914. There was, in addition, much evidence to show not only that armament industries in the major nations were being speeded up, but that armament sales to the smaller Powers were rising. A dispassionate view of the naval situation likewise

suggested that even on this question, which had been most successfully handled, the outlook for progress in further limitation was very dark.

Despite the obvious air of unreality which now surrounded every discussion of the subject, the Disarmament Conference re-opened at last on May 29. In the speeches of the principal delegates the persistence of the divergence in views that had always hampered progress was all too apparent. In fact the most significant change that had occurred since October 1933 was the known fact that Germany was not only determined to achieve an unknown amount of rearmament, but that, in violation of the Treaty of Versailles, she had already begun to do it. Thus, while various aspects of the general problem continued to be mooted, the dust arising from the threshing of old straw could not obscure the fact that the issue really was what to do about Germany.

On the one side was Great Britain, whose spokesmen, Sir John Simon and Anthony Eden, still thought that the British draft convention offered an acceptable basis for an agreement and that everything possible should be done to bring Germany back into the Conference. Their position was supported in the main by the United States, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Spain, and Switzerland. Opposed to them was Barthou, who made an impassioned plea for acceptance of the French thesis that security must come before disarmament. He was upheld by Soviet Russia, Turkey, the Little Entente states, and those of the Balkan Entente. It is perhaps significant that Poland and Italy remained in the background, although on May 26, just before the opening of the Conference, Mussolini made one of his characteristic speeches extolling the merits of war in developing national character.

The root difficulty over security lay in the fact that both Great Britain and the United States were still trying to pursue a policy of isolation. Norman Davis, in an authorized statement, declared that the United States was prepared, 'in connection with a general Disarmament Convention, to negotiate a universal pact of non-aggression and to join with other nations in conferring on international problems growing out of any treaties to which they were a party.' But in the next sentence he went on to say: 'The United States would not, however, participate in European political negotiations and settlements and would not make any commitment whatever to use its armed forces for the settlement

of any dispute anywhere.' This was very fine for the United States, but it did not help the French to feel secure in the face of Hitler's threat that '*the regaining of the lost regions will not come about through solemn appeals to the dear Lord or through pious hopes in a League of Nations, but only by force of arms.*'<sup>4</sup>

In Great Britain, the powerful Beaverbrook press was still advocating isolation from continental squabbles. That and the upsurge of the pacifist movement were anything but reassuring to a realist who surveyed the European scene. More important, however, from a French point of view was the fact that the British Government since the previous January had seemed to favor the German demands for equality. Italy, likewise, had insisted that the principle of equality should be applied in practice. It is little wonder, then, that Barthou, at swords' points with Simon, nearly caused an open break at the Conference.

At length a resolution was framed for which everyone voted, Italy and Poland making slight reservations. It provided that (1) the Bureau was to continue seeking a solution of the outstanding problems while Governments might undertake negotiations to facilitate the return of Germany; (2) four special committees were to be set up to study the questions of security, special guarantees of execution, air forces, and the manufacture and trade in arms; (3) the Bureau was to take the necessary steps to insure as far as possible a complete draft convention when the Conference met again; finally, (4) a special proposal of the U.S.S.R. that the Conference be declared a permanent institution with the special duty of preventing war, thus relieving the League of Nations of that burden, was to be submitted by the President to the Governments represented in the Conference.

The establishment of a committee to investigate the arms industry is noteworthy. At this time agitation was spreading throughout the democracies for control of private manufacture and sale of armaments. The gentlemen engaged in the business were the targets of the emotions aroused by the failure to achieve the great ideal of disarmament, the scapegoats whom the public could blame for the shattering of their hopes.

Private manufacture and sale of arms had been condemned as a danger to peace in the League Covenant itself (Art. 8), but little had been done about it beyond two conventions drawn up in 1925 of which one was signed but never ratified, and the other

<sup>4</sup> *Mein Kampf* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1939), p. 912. *Italics in the original. Cf. ibid.*, p. 916.

not even signed. When the Disarmament Conference met in 1932, a committee was set up to deal with the problem, but it had done little except to consider proposals designed to take the profits out of the business and to subject it to national control and international supervision. Great Britain and the United States, who, together with France, made about 55 per cent of the world's armament, opposed the proposals. But a lively propaganda in 1933-34 and the publication of such highly readable and interesting books as *The Merchants of Death* resulted in the United States Senate investigation of 1934 and a very much aroused public in all three democracies. As usual, the propagandists against the machinations of the armament industry went a little too far in their claims, even using them to account for Mussolini, Hitler, the Tory attitude in England, and the Fascist movement in France. But again, as in the case of so many other liberal and progressive movements at this time, the tragedy of the well-meant opposition to the arms trade lay in the fact that the movement which might have accomplished something if vigorously pushed before 1930 was now futile in the face of Japanese, German, and Italian determination to win *Lebensraum* by force. Thus, when the United States presented a carefully drafted convention on the control and regulation of the international arms traffic in November, not only would Italy have nothing to do with it, but England and France were also non-committal.

On June 12, the Disarmament Conference adjourned once more without much prospect of ever being called again, even though the Bureau or Steering Committee remained in existence. Most correspondents spoke of the funereal aspects of the Conference. Some contrasted the situation with the breathless expectations and high hopes with which it had opened in February 1932. Some blamed the situation on the lack of leadership, and Frederick T. Birchall, of the *New York Times*, unwittingly, perhaps, presaged the new order that was arising while the hopes of world peace and cooperation through disarmament were dying when he wrote that the absence of a 'strong personality to arise and make an end of these futilities . . . arousing the world to what is coming should they refuse to unite . . . may explain why so many people are beginning to echo the sentiment that Premier Mussolini, who knows what he wants and has a way of getting it, has become the first statesman of Europe.'<sup>5</sup> The im-

<sup>5</sup> *New York Times*, June 3, 1934, Sec. IV, p. 2.

mediate future did indeed belong to the strong men who set out to get what they wanted 'by means of a sharp sword,' and were unchecked in their adventure because of the divided wills and the misdirected idealism of all those who still yearned for peace.

### 5. *Hitler and Austria*

Hitler had achieved another triumph when the Disarmament Conference adjourned and the Great Powers failed to set legal limits to German rearmament or to establish any system of control over it. Together with the apparent crumbling of collective resistance to Germany's resurgence, this represented a very considerable degree of progress toward the ultimate goal of a dominant position in Europe. The one outstanding defeat, however, during Hitler's first eighteen months of office was administered by little Austria. The defeat was the more significant because Austria's fate was the real touchstone of Nazi policy and of the effectiveness of European resistance to it. This was so not merely because a cardinal aim of Hitler, mentioned on page one of *Mein Kampf*, was the *Anschluss* or joining of Austria with the German Reich, but also because Austria lay at the geographical, economic, and political crossroads of many European interests.

If Vienna is taken as the center of a circle with a radius of five hundred miles, easy flying range for a bomber squadron, the area thus delineated on the European map of 1933-34 included most of Germany and Poland, all of Czechoslovakia and Hungary, almost all of Rumania and Jugoslavia, some of Bulgaria and Albania, much of Italy, all of Switzerland, Luxemburg, and Alsace-Lorraine in France. Vienna was thus the geographical heart of Central Europe. More significantly, Austria was not only the gateway for Germany to the south and southeast, but it was also the most important strategic approach to the natural bastions of Czechoslovakia. From another angle, Austria was a link or barrier, depending upon circumstances, between Italy, Hungary, and the succession states, and also between Germany and Italy. With Hungary, Austria constituted the magnetic core of the otherwise loosely connected Little Entente.

Furthermore, Austria's geographical location was significant for economic as well as strategic and political reasons. Since she was a part of that crazy-quilt of nationalistic and economically unsound states that had sprung up after the dissolution of the



Austro-Hungarian Empire, she not only shared with the others a very troublesome economic problem, but also was bound to adopt with them much the same solution. All of these little nations, predominantly agricultural, had to look abroad for industrial products; yet in the spirit of the post-war years, they attempted autarchy, thus aggravating the difficulties for themselves and their neighbors in a region that had formerly been a relatively free-trade area. Austria, along with Hungary, was probably worse off than Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Rumania. After the depression something had to be done for the little Austrian state with only 32,000 square miles of territory and about 6,500,000 people, of whom more than a quarter were concentrated in the city of Vienna.

At least three possible ways were open for securing Austria's well-being: International aid; federation, or some form of customs union with its neighbors; union with, or dependency upon, some Great Power. Bickering among the Great Powers had prevented the first choice from being effected, aside from some financial aid in 1922 and later years from the League of Nations. A number of difficulties blocked the project of federating the Danubian region as proposed by Tardieu in 1932. A Danubian federation would still lack the industrial products for a balanced economy. The revisionism of Hungary constituted a stumbling-block in any scheme of federation, and since the Little Entente was backed by France in favoring Danubian federation, Germany and Italy, who also wanted to dominate the region, were opposed to such plans. *Anschluss* with Germany was a solution favored by a majority of Germans and Austrians before Hitler's accession to power. After that, the aversion to National Socialism of the Austrian Social Democrats and Christian Socialists, the two largest parties in the little republic, brought about Austrian opposition to *Anschluss*. Also, Czechoslovakia, France, and Italy opposed it because of the dangers to each country of an enlarged Germany.

The one remaining solution — dependence upon Italy — was gradually imposed upon Austria by the events of 1933 and 1934. Italy, hoping for influence in Southeastern Europe after the World War, had been thwarted in her ambitions by her quarrel with Yugoslavia and by the superior strength of France in 1920-30. About 1930, however, Italy had begun to make headway, first with Hungary, whose revisionist aims she supported, and then with Austria. Despite the Little Entente's

dislike for such a solution, France gradually tended to support it as a method of gaining an ally against Hitler.

In addition to economic maladjustments and the vicissitudes of power politics, Austria became a battle-ground of three ideologies: Fascism, Nazism, and Socialism. Racially homogeneous, lacking minority problems except those posed by the presence of the influential Jewish group in Vienna, Austria, nevertheless, suffered early in the post-war era from the strife between the two predominant parties, Social Democrats and Christian Socialists. The former belonged to the evolutionary wing of Marxism and derived their principal support from the industrial workers of Vienna, where the party could point with pride to an expertly administered municipal government and to a model social-welfare program. Since the cost of the latter was financed through taxation borne largely by resistant upper classes and remnants of the old aristocracy, the Social Democrats aroused antagonism that helped to prevent them from dominating the Austrian Government. Furthermore, outside Vienna the peasants supported the clerical, anti-Marxist, anti-Semitic Christian Socialist Party from whose ranks sprang Seipel and Dollfuss. Supported by semi-military organizations (the *Schutzbund* of the Socialists and the *Heimwehr* of the Christian Socialists), the two parties clashed in noisy and sometimes bloody frays.

Not only the opposition of the Social Democrats but also shaky allegiances and uncertain aims prevented the Christian Socialists and the *Heimwehr* from establishing a dictatorial régime in Austria. By 1933, Dollfuss, Chancellor and leader of the Christian Socialists, was attempting to reform the Government along lines suggested in Leo XIII's encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, of 1891, and reiterated in Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno* of 1931. Yet the Right-Wing elements, which had nearly complete control of the police and army, were swinging away from Dollfuss to the newly established Austrian National Socialist Party and its private army, the *Heimatbund*, directed by Nazi headquarters in Germany. Even Christian Socialist and *Heimwehr* leaders were in touch with Nazis and Italian Fascists both inside and outside the country.

Thus, only the Social Democrats, together with a handful of Communists whom they hated, could be depended upon to oppose *Anschluss* with Germany. However, no cooperation between Social Democrats, with their opposition to Fascism and to a

clerical dictatorship, and Dollfuss was possible. Had Hitler and his supporters been a little more cautious and less precipitate, Austria probably would have dropped into their laps like ripe fruit. Instead, their ill-timed attacks upon the Austrian Government in 1933 stiffened the desire for independence and finally helped to drive Austria into Italy's arms.

The story of Austria in 1933 and 1934 is that of a diminutive land, led by a diminutive semi-dictator, defying the Nazi colossus from a foothold little more steady or reliable than quicksand. Engelbert Dollfuss, of peasant stock, trained in law and economics, World War veteran, and active in politics as a Christian Socialist since 1927, had been Chancellor of Austria since May 1932. Small of stature, pious, simple in manner, Dollfuss, a 'charming' but 'black' reactionary opposed democracy, *Anschluss*, and Danubian federation. Consequently he was driven to seek support from Fascist elements in Austria and finally from Mussolini.

As John Gunther has pointed out, Dollfuss was lucky at many critical points of his career. Just before Hitler's triumph in the elections of March 5, 1933, the Austrian Parliament died with the resignation of the speaker and his deputies over a rumored Nazi-*Heimwehr* Putsch. With no one left to reassemble Parliament legally, Dollfuss became virtual dictator merely by refraining from calling new elections. At the same time the German National Socialist campaign of terror to force Austria into the Reich helped Dollfuss by alienating many of those in Austria who had previously favored *Anschluss*, but who had no taste for Nazi *Gleichschaltung*. Yet the Chancellor's position was precarious, for he had to seek help from the *Heimwehr*, many of whose members and some of whose leaders openly supported Hitler. Nevertheless, he took the *Heimwehr* into the administration as auxiliary police. At the same time he attempted to build up a party of his own, the Fatherland Front.

While Austro-German relations had begun to cool off in 1932, after Hitler's coup they became strained, because no one could doubt that he was directing the activities of the Austrian Nazis in their efforts to supplant the Dollfuss Government by a National Socialist one whose purpose was to make of Austria a German province. A series of incidents were climaxed by the expulsion from Austria on May 15 of Dr. Frank, Bavarian Minister of Justice, on the accusation of inciting disloyalty to the Austrian Government. Germany retaliated by raising the visa fee

for tourists, thus cutting off a lucrative source of Austrian income. Bombings and other terroristic acts were attributed to German Nazi inspiration.

Meanwhile, Dollfuss began seeking outside aid, and in June obtained from Mussolini, who was nevertheless reluctant to antagonize Germany during his Four-Power Pact negotiations, a profession of friendship for an independent Austria. Dollfuss also received an ovation at the World Economic Conference, and secured trade pacts with France, Poland, and Yugoslavia, while in July he obtained the international loan promised at Lausanne the year before.

After a lull, following Hitler's pacific speech of May 17, German pressure on Austria recommenced in mid-June when Austria arrested many Nazis, including Herr Habicht, the German press attaché at Vienna. Germany retaliated with arrests and expulsions of Austrians. The bomb outrages and the radio broadcasts from the Munich station, which soon followed, caused Dollfuss to outlaw the Austrian Nazi Party on June 19. Many of the party members went to Germany where a legion of Austrian exiles was formed near the border under the leadership of Habicht, now appointed Nazi 'Inspector-General' for Austria.

By August the fate of 'brave little Austria' was a major concern to the Western Powers, who had no desire, however, to come to an open break with Germany. Italy, for example, refrained from acting in concert with France and Britain in making protests to Germany, but, instead, made friendly representations in Berlin on August 6 and received what were termed satisfactory assurances, though Munich's radio station continued its scurrilous attacks upon Dollfuss. British and French representatives visiting the Wilhelmstrasse on August 7 received scant courtesy and were told that interference in Austro-German affairs was inadmissible. That Mussolini now held the reins was evident when, on August 19, Dollfuss visited him at Riccione for the third time since April. There, in addition to the discussion of economic considerations, Austrian independence was again stressed. Dollfuss apparently agreed to certain conditions for Italian support, among which were the crushing of the Marxian Socialists and more complete cooperation with the *Heimwehr*, already dependent upon the Duce for financial support. A few days later, Dollfuss obtained the consent of the Western Powers to increase his army by eight thousand, thus bringing it to the treaty limit of thirty thousand.

On the home front, Dollfuss proclaimed that Austria would 'build up a Catholic, German state . . . thoroughly Austrian upon a corporative basis.' He reorganized his Cabinet on September 21, retaining the chancellorship and four other posts for himself. An attempt on his life on October 3 luckily resulted only in wounds and the chance to play the rôle of a patriotic martyr. Yet at the end of 1933, the Chancellor was still treading on quicksand. He had failed in an attempt through Schuschnigg, Minister of Justice and Education, to arrive at a *modus vivendi* with Germany. His own supporters were flirting with the Nazis, who opposed him from one wing while the Social Democrats fought him from another. And finally, in spite of his having taken more and more *Heimwehr* leaders into the Government in an effort to check their intrigues with the Nazis, it seemed, up to the middle of January 1934, that the Austrian people, in a revolt against clerical and conservative domination, might well go Nazi.

Undismayed, however, Dollfuss decided to fight on. After the proposal of an appeal to the League was opposed by Mussolini, Italy, France, and Great Britain issued a mild declaration on February 17 that the maintenance of Austria's independence and integrity in accordance with the relevant 'treaties' was necessary. This amounted to little more than a promise of diplomatic support. At the same time, a temporary lull in Nazi activities and the declaration of Hitler on January 30, 1934, that Germany did not intend to 'violate the Austrian State' were both belied by Habicht's radio broadcast on February 19 which stated that there would be an eight-day 'armistice' to give the Austrian Government an opportunity to decide whether or not it would join the National Socialist movement.

Meanwhile, Dollfuss was carrying on his fight against the Social Democrats, who had become anathema to such powerful figures as Fritz Mandl, armament manufacturer and abettor of both Nazis and *Heimwehren*. For a brief moment in the uncertain month of January 1934, when even his own conservative supporters appeared ready to desert him for the Nazis, the Chancellor had seemed about ready to attempt cooperation with the Social Democrats. If reports be true, the *Heimwehr* and Mussolini insisted that he crush them instead. Dollfuss yielded, and, on the usual Fascist pretext of saving the Fatherland from a revolution, called out the *Heimwehr* and police. In a short but bloody struggle early in February 1934, they succeeded in stamp-

ing out Social Democracy. With this blow the last hope of a liberal Austria died, and its eventual Nazification was made infinitely easier. Dollfuss and the *Heimwehr* now hastened to make the Austrian Government genuinely dictatorial. One Austrian union was created for the workers, while all others were proscribed. On April 30, 1934, the remnant of the Austrian Parliament was convened, and after promptly approving both the Dollfuss régime and a Fascistic constitution, was quickly persuaded to vote itself out of existence.

Meanwhile, efforts to relieve the Austrian economic situation culminated in the Italo-Austro-Hungarian agreements embodied in the Rome Protocols. Hungary shared in the schemes for Austrian economic betterment, not only because she was a neighbor and closely linked with Austria historically, but also because her revisionist claims made her an important factor in the Danubian area, particularly in the problem of maintaining Austrian independence. Should Hungary decide to look to Germany for support, Mussolini's plans for preventing a union of Austria and Germany would become more difficult. During 1931-33 he made a number of fruitless attempts to solve Danubian economic difficulties by a closer union of the countries directly and indirectly involved. These efforts had met with objections from Germany, who was unwilling to see Italian influence spreading in that area, and from the Little Entente, who feared the re-establishment of the former Austro-Hungarian hierarchy in Danubian affairs. Moreover, statistics suggest that attempting to link Italy, Austria, and Hungary in an economic bloc was like trying to make water run uphill. Italian trade in 1933 took fifth place in the foreign commerce of Austria and fourth in that of Hungary. On the other hand, despite the conflict with Germany, Austria's greatest exchange of goods was with the Reich. Austria was Hungary's best customer, followed by Germany and then Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, Mussolini was determined to attempt an 'Italian solution' of the Danubian economic problem. Unable to win the Little Entente over, he finally decided to attempt the formation of the Three-Power economic group.

On March 15-17, Dollfuss, Hungarian Premier Goemboes, and Mussolini worked out an agreement at Rome embodied in the Rome Protocols signed on March 17, 1934. These turned out to be more important in a political than in an economic sense. Two of the three documents involved all three countries, one providing for consultation among the three states in an ef-

fort to pursue a common policy, and the other outlining common economic objectives to be further defined not later than May 15. In the third, Italy and Austria signed an agreement providing for the negotiation of a new trade treaty. On May 14 the final economic agreements were signed, but, because of the fact that the three countries did not constitute an economic unit, neither the Rome Protocols nor the final agreements represented more than economic patchwork occasioned by political necessity.

During this period Mussolini contributed to the fears of the Little Entente by speaking in favor of 'justice' for Hungary. The inconsistency of his position in demanding revision of the Trianon Treaty, but resisting revision of St. Germain and Versailles if it meant joining Austria and Germany, revealed again the difficulties an Italian solution of the Danubian problem would encounter. Also, at this time, recurrent rumors of Hapsburg restoration in Austria further alarmed the Little Entente which had originally been formed to prevent such an eventuality. It is not surprising, therefore, that on March 21 Czech Foreign Minister Beneš, in summing up all possible solutions of the Austrian problem, rejected an 'Italian solution' since it meant the setting-up of an apparently hostile bloc, and suggested a European guarantee of Austrian independence and integrity as a first step toward the establishment of an economically healthy Austrian state. Although his proposal was unheeded, the Austrian economic situation did improve somewhat as Austrian tourist traffic, foreign trade, and employment rose. Political problems, however, pressed to the fore as critical conditions in Germany pushed Hitler into desperate measures including an attempt to seize Austria.

The Nazi régime in Germany was running into a crucial period at home in the spring of 1934. Hitler's honeymoon days were over and friction between the discordant elements among his supporters came very near the surface. Measuring production on the basis of 100 for 1928, there had been an increase from 62.9 in January 1933 to 89.4 in early 1934; and the number of unemployed had been halved in the same period. But real wages had declined because of the rise in the cost of living, and Germany's international trade position had become very difficult. In 1934 she suffered an unfavorable trade balance when imports exceeded exports for the first time in years. Leftist supporters of Hitler grumbled as the Nazi régime failed to enact the more radical portions of its program, while conservative backers

were critical of increased state regulation made necessary by a shrinking gold reserve and a scarcity of raw materials. Both the masses and the classes began to feel that they had been sold out. Representative of the former were the Storm Troopers, the private army of the National Socialist Party, whose membership by now was 2,500,000, and who were led by Captain Roehm, a member of the Cabinet since 1933. Junkers, industrialists, and the conservative wing of the party wanted the Storm Troopers curbed before they became strong enough to effect their radical program of socialization, and to pursue a policy of even more violent Jew-baiting than already existed.

It is possible that the showdown between these factions would not have occurred at this time had not the question of defense become the burning issue of the day. Germany was definitely planning to expand her army and other military forces in the spring of 1934. The Storm Troopers wanted to be included within the *Reichswehr* or at least coordinated with it. The conservative *Reichswehr*, however, was distrustful of such a 'rabble.' The conservatives apparently won out. The Brown Shirts were ordered to go on a month's vacation in July when their budget was to be drastically reduced. In June, Roehm became ill and took a rest. Two further incidents occurred which had a bearing on this struggle. Mussolini is alleged to have advised Hitler when they met at Venice in June to get rid of his radical followers, while von Papen, on June 17, bitterly criticized the Nazi régime in a speech which was suppressed in German papers and was generally regarded as a signal for a *coup d'état* by the forces on the Right.

Hitler at this juncture outwitted his enemies in one of those surprise strokes with which the world has since become so familiar. He himself delivered the blow at his Left-Wing supporters, and thus kept the leading-strings in his own hands. On June 30, alleging that Roehm and his associates were plotting against the state and the Fuehrer, Hitler and Goering personally directed a series of arrests and executions which brought death not only to Roehm and many other Brown Shirt leaders, but also to von Schleicher and his wife, two aides of von Papen, and other prominent leaders. This 'Blood Purge' for which Hitler took all responsibility did not bring on a revolt as many expected, but as a result of it, Hitler moved farther to the Right in his domestic policies. One evidence of this was his appointment of Hjalmar Schacht as Minister of Economics with absolute power to ease



the economic situation by whatever steps he deemed necessary.

If the Blood Purge was a victory for the conservatives in Germany, the Nazi *Putsch* of July 25 in Austria may well have been intended as a sop to the radicals, or an external diversion from internal worries, though its timing also coincided with a threatened overt conflict between Dollfuss and the *Heimwehr*. It is unnecessary to recount the tale of the bungled Nazi attempt to seize the Austrian Government. Dollfuss was shot and allowed to bleed to death without benefit of physician or priest as a result of a plot which was badly managed and partially betrayed by the conspirators, among whom were Austrian statesmen, police officers, and diplomats. If anyone doubted that the *Putsch* had been directed from Germany, the elaborate ceremonies staged by the Nazi régime on July 25, 1938, after Austria had been *gleichgeschaltet*, were to disperse any illusions. But in 1934, Hitler, for many reasons, found it expedient to disavow the whole affair when it was plain that the Nazis had failed. He even sent von Papen to Vienna post-haste in an attempt to secure more peaceful relations.

The immediate consequences of the *Putsch* for Austria were the emergence of Kurt Schuschnigg, faithful subordinate and friend of Dollfuss, as the new man of destiny and of Mussolini as his protector. Upon the first news of trouble, Mussolini had ordered troops to the Brenner Pass, Czechoslovakia had been ready to march from the north, and Yugoslavia from the south. It looked for a split second of history's time-clock as if four countries might march over Austria without well-defined motives, except that Italy and Czechoslovakia would confront Germany even though not allied to each other, while Yugoslavia would certainly resist Italy and perhaps side with Germany. The need for action was obviated by the prompt formation of the Schuschnigg Government. After the *Putsch*, with Nazi activity at a low point in Austria, Schuschnigg began consolidating his position by a friendly consultation with Goemboes of Hungary and a meeting on September 21 with Mussolini at Rome where the two apparently reached complete accord as to close political and economic cooperation in accordance with the Rome Protocols. Since at the same time Great Britain blocked any action by the League of Nations, although she joined with France and Italy in renewing on September 27 the weak and ineffectual February declaration, Italy remained the principal defender of Austria and of Schuschnigg's régime. Making his position clear, Mus-

solini declared on October 6, 1934, 'We have defended and will defend the independence of the Austrian Republic, an independence which has been consecrated by the blood of a Chancellor, who may have been small in stature, but whose spirit and soul were great.' These words, as well as Hitler's denials of complicity in the July *Putsch*, were conveniently forgotten in March 1938.

#### 6. *Der Fuehrer, August 1934*

Meanwhile, the death of President von Hindenburg on August 2 enabled Hitler to issue a decree conferring upon himself, as *Fuehrer*, all powers hitherto exercised by the President in addition to those of the Reich Chancellor. The results of the plebiscite held to confirm this decree were so annoying, since about 15 per cent of the voters registered 'No' or spoiled their ballots in contrast with the usual one or two per cent, that Hitler has never held another vote on a purely domestic issue. Nevertheless, by requiring the army, and subsequently all public officials, to take an oath of allegiance to himself, Hitler substantially increased his hold upon the *Reichswehr*, hitherto regarded as more loyal to von Hindenburg than to the régime, and upon the great body of civil servants.

Thus, June, July, and August had proved to be crucial months for the Third Reich. Radicals had been expunged from the party in a bloody purge and violent annexation of Austria had failed; both events had shocked the outside world even more than any previous Nazi excesses. Within Germany all efforts were expended to attain the goal of military preparedness. That involved a terrific struggle on the economic front as well as a shrewd diplomatic campaign to split the enemies of German rearmament and the proponents of collective security.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# GERMAN REARMAMENT AND FRENCH SECURITY

EVEN before the failure of the Disarmament Conference it had become obvious that if France and her friends wished to guarantee their security, they would have to find additional safeguards in view of the fact that German disarmament was fast becoming a myth. While progressives and liberals continued to advocate the revision of the peace treaties under the aegis of the League of Nations, French Foreign Minister Barthou adopted a plan for a series of regional and mutual-assistance pacts that were designed to meet every threat of aggression by the resistance of the states most directly concerned. Precedents for such a course had been established in the Locarno Pacts of 1925 and the Little Entente Pact of 1933. A further step in the same general direction had been taken by the signing of a Balkan Pact on February 9 at Athens. Since this last entente was regarded as contributing to Barthou's scheme of a pact-bound Europe, it forms a fitting introduction to the negotiations of 1934 for an 'Eastern Locarno.'

### *1. The Balkan Entente*

As a son of the Balkans has pointed out, the little countries — Rumania, Jugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, and European Turkey — supply the keg while the Great European Powers furnish the powder for what has become known as the 'powder keg of Europe.'<sup>1</sup> Characterized by a mosaic of nationalities and criss-crossed by mountain ranges, the region has had no well-defined boundaries on the north where the political and economic problems of the geographical Balkan peninsula merge with those of Central Europe. Both are economically poor and predominantly agricultural, but whereas the industrial revolution has long since penetrated as far as the confines of Austria and Bohemia, it has scarcely begun in the regions to the south-

<sup>1</sup> P. B. Stoyan, *Spotlight on the Balkans* (Foreign Policy Association, *Headline Books*, New York, 1940), p. 11.

east. Furthermore, while the Roman Catholic religion and Hapsburg domination over Central Europe tied that region to Western European culture, Ottoman rule over the Balkans, lasting well down into the nineteenth century, together with Greek Orthodoxy, pulled them eastward.

After the First World War, to which the Balkans had played the prelude in the wars of 1912-13, the Balkan nations emerged with an exaggerated national feeling and with that conflict over revision or *status quo* so characteristic of the rest of Europe. Bulgaria felt most aggrieved because she had lost territory inhabited by Bulgarians to all her neighbors, and had been cut off from an outlet to the Aegean Sea. Most of all, however, she resented the loss of Dobrudja to Rumania and portions of Macedonia to Yugoslavia including a section that the Serbian Government, to which Yugoslavia succeeded, had itself recognized in 1912 as properly belonging to Bulgaria. Albania had been at swords' points with Greece over Northern Epirus since 1913. Turkey, an ally of Bulgaria and the Central Powers in the war, had experienced a renaissance of national feeling and under the leadership of Mustapha Kemal had successfully opposed the terms of peace drawn up by the victorious Powers. As a result, the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923, the only negotiated peace at the close of the First World War, left Turkey fairly well satisfied and therefore in a position to effect eventually a rapprochement with her former enemies.

While Great Britain kept up her former interest in the Balkans and the Near East, France and Italy replaced the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Russia as Great-Power contestants in the age-old struggle for domination of the Balkans whose strategic location near one of the world's oldest crossroads, the Straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, enhanced the value of the region. After 1932, however, their influence in the Balkans tended to decline. Italy had to her credit a close alliance with Albania, friendship with Bulgaria, and cordial relations with Greece and Turkey. Yet, Balkan suspicions of Mussolini's imperialistic ambitions caused them to cool toward Italy. France was linked by treaties of friendship with Rumania and Yugoslavia both of whom lost their enthusiasm for her as the economic depression caused the discontinuance of French financial aid. Moreover, a movement toward 'the Balkans for the Balkan people' helped to develop self-reliance at the expense of former political and economic ties with Great Powers.

Following an abortive peasant-communist movement for Balkan federation in the first post-war decade, a Balkan Conference of representative citizens from all states was organized at Athens in 1930 to effect a 'rapprochement of the Balkan peoples' and to create a 'union of the Balkan states.' Successive annual meetings of the Conference as well as the more constant efforts of an elected council resulted in the creation of such economic and cultural institutions as a Juridical Committee to study the unification of law systems, a Balkan Maritime Commission, and a Balkan Labor Office. In the political field, however, Bulgaria's refusal to accept the *status quo* proved to be an insuperable obstacle to union. Nevertheless the Third Conference of 1932 drafted a Balkan Pact and the Fourth Conference in the next year recommended that annual meetings of the Balkan Prime Ministers should take place as a means of promoting a rapprochement among the states.

As a matter of fact Kemal Atatürk of Turkey, Premier Venizelos of Greece, King Alexander of Yugoslavia, and Foreign Minister Titulescu of Rumania are all credited with having already initiated negotiations to settle old controversies and to establish closer cooperation. Actually, up to the end of 1933, a series of bilateral negotiations and treaties had led to an appreciable improvement in Greco-Turkish and Bulgar-Yugoslav relations. Rumania and Yugoslavia had long been linked together in the Little Entente and were both on friendly terms with Turkey and Greece. Since Bulgaria was unwilling to go beyond the signature of bilateral non-aggression pacts and join in any Balkan 'Locarno' that would guarantee frontiers, the other Powers had to take such a step without her.

Finally, after receiving the approval of London and Paris, granted with the regret that Bulgaria would not be included in the scheme, and after being assured that Italy did not object, Greece, Yugoslavia, Rumania, and Turkey signed the Balkan Pact at Athens on February 9, 1934. In order to assure respect for contractual agreements and to maintain their established boundaries, they agreed to guarantee mutually the security of 'all their Balkan frontiers.' They also promised to concert measures to be taken in case of any eventualities that might threaten their interests. They further agreed not to undertake any political action nor assume any political obligations toward another Balkan country without consulting and gaining the previous consent of the contracting parties. The pact was to

run for ten years from the day of signature and to be open for the adherence of Bulgaria and Albania. In an accompanying protocol the four states adopted the same definition of an aggressor as that of the Soviet Pacts of July 1933, and also declared that the guarantee of frontiers was to be operative only if a Balkan state, alone or in conjunction with another state, should perpetrate an act of aggression against any of the signatories. Moreover, Turkey and Greece each made important reservations in order to avoid any complications that might compel them to break their respective neutrality treaties with Soviet Russia and Italy. This virtual reduction of the Balkan Entente to an anti-revisionist front against Bulgaria was distasteful to Yugoslavia whose pursuit of a rapprochement with Bulgaria received encouragement in the spring of 1934 by the latter's decision to suppress the IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization) that had done so much to poison relations between them.

While the Balkan Entente as established by the pact and the various expressed and implicit reservations thus failed to fulfill the hopes of the Balkan Conference,<sup>2</sup> the need for economic co-operation and for a bulwark against outside aggression was greater than ever. Nazi Germany was beginning to seek the recovery of Balkan trade that the Reich had lost in the First World War and in the depression and was finding success in both Yugoslavia and Greece. Italy strengthened her hold upon Albania after an impressive naval and aerial display in June, and extracted a promise from King Zog not to adhere to the Balkan Pact nor to cultivate close relations with Yugoslavia. Furthermore, Mussolini's announcement in March that Italy's future lay in Africa and Asia especially alarmed Turkey even though she was assured that Italy regarded her as a European rather than an Asiatic Power. At the same time France, who had previously supported such rivals of Italy as Yugoslavia, now began to seek Italian friendship and thus offered no protection against Italian ambitions.

In these circumstances Turkey took the lead in pressing for every possible strengthening of the Balkan Entente and for its cooperation with the Little Entente. Accordingly a permanent council representing the Balkan Pact signatories was established, and provision was made for an economic council as well. From Foreign Minister Beneš of Czechoslovakia, the only member of

<sup>2</sup> The Balkan Conference, though scheduled to meet in October 1934, was never convened after 1933.

the Little Entente not included in the Balkan group, came assurances that the Balkan Entente along with the Little Entente constituted an important guarantee of peace in the area. The *Central European Observer*, a semi-official Prague weekly, declared in the issue of June 29, 1934, that now peace had been assured 'from Prague to Ankara.' While this optimism represented a hope rather than an actuality, the favorable attitude of Soviet Russia toward the Balkan Entente constituted another reason why it might be expected to succeed in its main objective.

## 2. Barthou-Litvinov Eastern Locarno Pact

The foreign policy of Soviet Russia in 1934 was determined by the conviction that the aggressive policy of Japan in the Far East and of Nazi Germany in Europe would make war inevitable unless some means of preserving the peace were devised.<sup>3</sup> The keynote of the policy which the Soviet adopted was self-defense and cooperation with any peaceful nation even though the 'contradictions in the policies of the bourgeois states' might make that difficult. Said Stalin on January 26, 1934: 'Our orientation in the past and our orientation at the present time is towards the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.S.R. alone. . . . Those who want peace and are striving for business intercourse with us will always receive our support. And those who try to attack our country will receive a stunning rebuff to teach them not to poke their pig's snout into our Soviet garden again.' Accordingly, Soviet Russia made unaccepted offers to both Japan and Germany of non-aggression pledges and at the same time, with greater success, attempted to increase her trade with Great Britain and Poland and to establish normal diplomatic relations with such formerly bitter enemies as Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria. Moreover, the U.S.S.R. changed its aloof and contemptuous attitude toward the League of Nations to one of cordiality because cooperation with the League was necessary in order to promote 'collective' peace rather than exclusive binding alliances whose possible entanglements the Soviet wished to avoid. In addition, as Litvinov pointed out, the more aggressive nations had left the League. Accompanying this completion in the rev-

<sup>3</sup> See especially: Interview with Stalin, *New York Times*, Dec. 28, 1933, pp. 1, 8; Litvinov's speech, December 29, 1933, *Documents on International Affairs, 1933*, pp. 425-42; Stalin's speech, January 26, 1934, *Socialism Victorious* (London, n.d.), pp. 1-92; and Molotov's speech, January 28, 1935, *Documents on International Affairs, 1934*, pp. 405-15.

olution of Soviet foreign policy which had begun the year before went the gradual revival in 1934 of the Comintern, not as the former organ of world revolution, but as a means of developing cooperation with democratic forces everywhere against aggressive Fascism. While Stalin denied that there was any French orientation in Soviet policy, the exigencies of the international situation compelled the Soviet to seek especially close collaboration with France.

Such Frenchmen as former Premier Herriot and Air Minister Pierre Cot, both of whom visited the Soviet in September 1933, and members of the General Staff, who were impressed by Soviet military strength, advocated close cooperation with the U.S.S.R. in order to relieve France's Eastern allies of the danger of a two-front war and to win the support of Moscow for French theories of collective security. While Daladier and Paul-Boncour attempted direct negotiations with Germany over the armament question, they inaugurated conversations with the Soviet which bore fruit in a Franco-Soviet commercial treaty, signed on January 11, 1934. Just how far political discussions had gone when Barthou became Foreign Minister on February 9 is not certain, although they had probably not progressed beyond an exploratory stage in which a military alliance had been ruled out and the necessity of Russia's joining the League of Nations had been agreed upon. Barthou's policy of reviving the French alliances and gaining additional guarantees of security in view of German rearmament led him to develop with Maxim Litvinov a grandiose scheme of interlocking mutual-aid agreements involving an Eastern Locarno Pact similar to that concerning the Rhineland,<sup>4</sup> a Baltic Pact, the Little and Balkan Ententes, and a Mediterranean Locarno for which a Franco-Italian rapprochement would provide the foundation. The difficulties in the way of such a scheme were very great, not only because Barthou and Litvinov had to reckon with the allegation that they were merely attempting to encircle the Reich, but also because the attitudes of Poland, Jugoslavia, and Italy were far from encouraging.

While Barthou undertook, in a round of visits at Warsaw, Prague, Bucharest, and Belgrade, to regain French influence and to broach the new security scheme, Litvinov tackled Germany.

<sup>4</sup> There had been talk of an 'Eastern Locarno' involving at least Germany and France as early as 1931. See *Survey of International Affairs, 1931*, p. 83. The term was also sometimes used in 1934 to describe the German-Polish non-aggression treaty of January 26.



He first proposed to Berlin in March that the Soviet and the Reich should guarantee the sovereignty of the Baltic states of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Mindful of experiences during the Russian civil war, the Soviet was ever fearful of attacks by way of the Baltic, especially Finland, where there were frequent rumors of Nazi activity. Although the German refusal of these overtures boded ill for the plan of an Eastern Locarno, Litvinov discussed it with Foreign Minister Neurath at Berlin early in June only to find that Germany looked upon it as an anti-German scheme. Furthermore, Hitler visited Mussolini at Venice on June 14 in order to prevent Italy from being drawn into the Franco-Soviet orbit. Had the Nazis left Austria alone, Hitler might have succeeded in winning Italy to his side, for Mussolini was apparently wavering at this time between Germany and France, but the Nazi threat to Austrian independence eventually helped to drive Mussolini into the French camp.

Another Power whose support was essential if France and Russia were to succeed in their plans was Great Britain whose opposition to them at the Disarmament Conference had caused much uneasiness. On June 27, Barthou sent the draft of a definite proposal for an Eastern Locarno to London and on July 8 went there himself in order to win British approval. As worked out at this stage the plan envisaged a treaty of mutual assistance and consultation to be drawn up in 'conformity with the Covenant of the League of Nations' and to be signed by Germany, Poland, the U.S.S.R., Czechoslovakia, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. In addition there was to be an agreement whereby Russia would come to the aid of France if the latter suffered an unprovoked attack by Germany, thus supplementing British and Italian obligations under the original Locarno Pact, and France in turn would aid the Soviet as if France were a signatory of the Eastern Pact and in so far as would be 'consistent with her obligations under the Covenant of the League.' Finally, France was to be invited to participate in consultations over threats of aggression and the Soviet was to enter the League.<sup>5</sup> Although the English Government had been suspicious of Barthou's policy, it approved the plan when Sir John Simon was convinced

<sup>5</sup> Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, Cmd. 5143, 'Correspondence showing the course of certain diplomatic discussions . . . June 1934 to March 1936' (London, 1936), p. 80. Cf. André Géraud, 'France, Russia and the Pact of Mutual Assistance,' *Foreign Affairs*, XIII (January 1935), 226-35, and 'Eastern Europe: Vassal or Free?' *ibid.*, XVI (April 1938), 401-16.

that Great Britain would incur no new obligations and when he obtained Barthou's consent to include Germany in the Franco-Soviet undertaking, thereby permitting the Reich to enjoy equality with the other two in both the giving and receiving of aid.

Sir John Simon then urged the acceptance of the pact in this new form upon Germany, Poland, and Italy while Barthou submitted it to Russia. Mussolini quickly pledged his support, even though an anti-French press campaign was being waged at the moment in Italy, and the Soviet approved the amended proposal a few days later. While Germany sent no formal reply until September 10, the views then expressed were made known to the British Government in July. Germany rejected the plan because she preferred bilateral to multilateral pacts; she insisted that equality of armament must precede any security agreements; and she proudly chose to rely upon her own strength for protection rather than upon France or Russia. Furthermore, Germany thought the whole scheme was ineffective because in a pinch each nation would act in accordance with its own interests rather than its contractual obligations. While not closing the door to further discussion, Germany intimated that other means of guaranteeing security should be sought. However, she did not suggest any.

Besides this refusal of the Eastern Locarno plan, the German declaration in June of an indefinite postponement of foreign debt payments, the Blood Purge of June 30, the Vienna *Putsch*, and her poorly disguised rearmament caused Italian, and especially British, opinion to swing sharply to the side of France. On July 30, in support of measures to increase British air armament, acting Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin declared: 'When you think of the defense of England, you no longer think of the chalk cliffs of Dover, you think of the Rhine. That is where our frontier lies.' While this was the most heartening news Paris had heard from London in years, Soviet Russia also found solace in praise from the mouths of such Conservatives as Austen Chamberlain and Winston Churchill. Furthermore, because of a desire to prevent a revival of the Franco-Russian alliance by strengthening the instruments of collective security, Great Britain joined France in pressing for the admission of the U.S.S.R. to the League.

Soviet entry into the League of Nations, however, was not easily accomplished. It was rumored that both German and Rus-

sian military circles were opposed to it and preferred to work for a return to the Rapallo days of close German-Soviet cooperation. On the other hand, there were many League members who were still so suspicious of Soviet policy that they hesitated to invite the U.S.S.R. into the organization. When the invitation to join was finally passed by the Assembly on September 15, Switzerland, Portugal, and the Netherlands voted against it and seven other countries abstained from casting a ballot. The real opposition, however, came from Poland, who feared that Russia might exercise her right as a League member to bring before the Council the question of Polish minorities among whom the White Russians and Ukrainians formed a large proportion. Polish consent to Soviet entry was finally given only on condition that Polish-Russian relations were to continue to be based upon their previous treaties rather than upon the provisions of the Covenant. As a second safeguard, Poland took a step which she had long contemplated when she notified the Assembly that she would not cooperate with the League in its supervision of her treatment of minorities until all nations were placed upon an equal footing with respect to this question.

Poland's attitude toward Soviet entry into the League foreshadowed her rejection on September 27 of the proposed Eastern Locarno. Among the reasons for this were the fear that Poland might have little voice in a combination which included the Soviet, Germany, and France; the fact that Poland's ally Rumania and her friend Hungary were not included; and Polish dislike of being linked with Lithuania and Czechoslovakia with whom her relations were far from friendly. The most important consideration of all, however, in the determination of Poland's attitude was the possibility that after the German rejection of the proposal a Polish acceptance would nullify the effect of the non-aggression pact of January. Beck therefore declared that Poland would not enter an Eastern Locarno Pact unless Germany did so, and unless the Polish-German treaty were inserted in the text of the multilateral agreement.

Although the German and Polish rejections brought negotiations to a standstill, there had been one minor achievement in the direction of the Barthou-Litvinov plan. On September 12, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania signed a mutual-assistance treaty by which they also undertook to pursue a common foreign policy and to establish regular conferences and other means of close collaboration. Estonia and Latvia, however, refused to

consider the troublesome questions of Vilna and Memel as matters of common action because they wished to avoid becoming involved in Lithuanian quarrels with Poland and Germany. Even though this Baltic Entente added one more regional pact to the growing list, it was less significant as a means of security for the little states than as evidence that they had rejected Polish efforts to form a neutral bloc and were tending to swing into the Soviet orbit.

### *3. The Franco-Italian-British Entente*

The defeat of the Eastern Locarno plan and the obviously independent policy of Poland, which disgusted Frenchmen from Left to Right, helped to turn attention to the question of the Mediterranean. Here the success of Barthou's plans depended upon the ability of Italy and France to work together, but that in turn depended in no small measure upon Yugoslavia. Barthou had found King Alexander reserved when they had met at Belgrade in June, not only because the King was anti-Bolshevik, but also because he apparently feared that a Franco-Italian rapprochement might mean concessions by the French at the expense of Yugoslavia's Balkan and Adriatic interests. Nevertheless, Yugoslavia had acquiesced in the approval by both the Little and Balkan Ententes of Soviet entry into the League, and Alexander had accepted an invitation to visit France in the autumn for further discussions. Just what King Alexander had in mind to ask or what Barthou expected to offer will never be known, for the King was shot to death just a few minutes after he had landed at Marseilles on October 9 and Barthou at the same time was wounded so severely that he died soon afterward.

The murders were a painful reminder of the events that had started the First World War, although in this instance the situation was reversed. In 1914, a Serbian had shot the heir of the Hapsburgs in the interests of Yugoslav unity; in 1934, the Serbian king had been slain in protest against his policy of unifying all Yugoslavs without regard to minority opinion. In 1914, Russia and France had stood behind Serbia; in 1934, Italy, Hungary, and, according to some reports, Germany had stood behind the IMRO and the Croat *Ustashi* with which the murderer, a Macedonian émigré named Gheorhieff, had been associated. In 1934, however, nobody wanted to fight. Mussolini quickly intimated that he was ready for a rapprochement with Jugo-

slavia. France, torn between loyalty to her old friend and her desire to bring Italy into her European security schemes, counseled moderation and apparently connived at shunting the blame for encouraging the terrorist bands from Italy to Hungary. Thus, Yugoslav wrath was concentrated upon her lesser neighbor whom she accused of harboring and training Croat terrorists at Jáńka Puszta, a farm near the Yugoslav frontier. The matter was taken before the League in November and was finally settled by a series of compromises in the following months which permitted the tension between Yugoslavia and Hungary to relax. Furthermore, the League was aroused to attempt some action against terrorism which had accounted for the deaths in a few months of Dollfuss, Barthou, and King Alexander. Although a committee drew up conventions for 'the prevention and punishment of terrorism' and for the establishment of an international criminal court, neither ever went into effect.

Meanwhile, interest had long since swung back to the ever-present problem of German rearmament and French security. Pierre Laval succeeded Louis Barthou as French Foreign Minister, but for some time seemed to hesitate concerning the best policy to pursue. He was hampered to a certain extent by the French political crisis of November 6-8 when the Doumergue Government was succeeded by that of Flandin. Abroad there was also a general air of uncertainty and anxiety. Germany tried to better her relations with both Great Britain and Soviet Russia. Ribbentrop went to England in the middle of November to quiet the rising fear of German rearmament, but did not convince the Government that it should reduce its own program for increased armament which was regarded by such men as Churchill as too low and by Liberals and Laborites as too high. At the end of October, Germany announced her readiness to grant the Soviet Union a commercial credit of two hundred million marks, and throughout the following weeks gave many other signs of a desire for a rapprochement. The Soviet Government, on the other hand, was reported to be dissatisfied with the slow pace of economic and political negotiations with France, who was suspected of wanting to make another attempt at a deal with Germany.

Laval, indeed, did seem to hesitate between a policy of appeasing Germany and resuming Barthou's course. The Rightist groups of Fascistic tendency who had flourished under Doumergue were in favor of the one, and the Left of the other. While Laval concluded an agreement with Germany early in December for

the sale of French-owned Saar coal mines and the transfer of the Saar from the French to the German economic régime in case the plebiscite of January 13, 1935, resulted in a vote for its return to the Reich, he also began to pick up the threads of the Barthou-Litvinov scheme. After consultation with the Soviet in November, he pointed out to Poland that the Eastern Locarno proposal would not conflict with the Polish-German Pact and that Poland need assume no obligations toward Lithuania and Czechoslovakia. His speech on foreign affairs in the Chamber on November 30, 1934, was interpreted as a final bid for German acceptance of the Eastern Locarno plan, though he also declared that there could be no change in existing frontiers and that security had to come before disarmament. On December 5, Laval concluded an agreement with Litvinov by which they promised to refrain from engaging in negotiations with others which might compromise the conclusion of an Eastern Pact. They further agreed to collaborate closely, not only with respect to the 'Pact of the East,' but also, should they agree that its pursuit was no longer useful, with respect to any other negotiations which might be substituted for it.

The declaration of this agreement, which identified Laval completely with the trend of Barthou's policy, was hailed by Litvinov as proof of the constant disposition of the Soviet Union and France toward rapprochement and toward international collaboration in the interests of peace. Since Czechoslovakia adhered to the declaration on December 9, it was significant as the beginning of the Franco-Czechoslovak-Soviet triplique which lasted until 1938. Pertinax, a journalist who had been reputedly close to Barthou, revealed the underlying French motive for the rapprochement when he wrote that 'the Reichswehr has been definitely cut off from Russia's formidable reservoir of raw materials and man-power.'<sup>6</sup> Since the pressing problem of the Saar had been settled with Germany and the accord concluded with the Soviet, Laval could set off for Rome at the beginning of January to reap further rewards of Barthou's spadework.

Between January 5 and 7, 1935, Laval and Mussolini arrived at a series of agreements that offered a program for the attainment of Central European stability and security and at the same time seemed to settle all the accumulated Italian grievances of twenty years against France. They promised to consult with one

<sup>6</sup> André Géraud, 'France, Russia and the Pact of Mutual Assistance,' *Foreign Affairs*, XIII (January 1935), 235.

another and with Austria should Austrian independence or integrity appear to be threatened, but, to avoid such a contingency, they recommended that Italy, Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Austria sign an accord promising non-interference in one another's internal affairs, to which France, Poland, and Rumania might adhere. The principle of consultation should likewise be accepted by these Powers in case of threatened breaches of the pact which, it is easy to see, involved the cooperation of the Rome Protocol group with the Little Entente and with Germany. In regard to armament Laval and Mussolini, referring to the declaration of December 1932 which had granted Germany equality, declared that France and Italy were opposed to modification of existing obligations by unilateral acts and would consult together if such an eventuality should arise. Thus, Laval had won for the most part his immediate objective — that of getting Italian support for a multilateral security pact system in Central Europe — even though he had not obtained a promise from Mussolini to oppose German rearmament.

Italy, however, was to receive her reward in the colonial sphere. The status of Italians in Tunis, in dispute since the end of the World War, was settled. France ceded to Italy some 44,500 square miles of territory to be added to Italian Libya, a strip of land along the African coast south of Eritrea, and the island of Doumerrah in the Red Sea, cessions which had been promised in principle at the time of the peace settlements, but never before put into effect. In addition, France was to transfer to Italy some shares in the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway, the only one from the sea to the Abyssinian capital. Then, too, Laval apparently promised a free hand to Italy in Abyssinia. Although there was much subsequent controversy over just what Laval said or intended to say about this matter, nothing was known of it in January when the Rome accord was hailed with delight both in France and Italy and when the plan for Central Europe was approved by both the Little and Balkan Ententes.

It was the hope of both Mussolini and Laval that Great Britain could be associated with the proposals to be made to Germany, but before she could be approached attention was diverted to the Saar plebiscite on January 13, 1935. The significance of the Saar vote had been enhanced by Hitler's insistence for over a year that this region constituted the only outstanding territorial question between France and Germany, and by the

expectation in anti-Nazi quarters that the Saar would refuse to join Germany under its existing régime. Thus, the outcome of the vote was eagerly awaited. It might determine future Franco-German relations; in the opinion of many, it offered an opportunity, in an election under internationally guaranteed conditions of free choice, to discover the true feeling of the German people toward Hitler's dictatorship. Undoubtedly, those who held the latter view were wrong because the Saarlanders in registering their desire to return to Germany were not voting on a National Socialist issue at all. To them it was merely a choice of returning to Germany, going to France, or remaining under League administration. Nevertheless, the great to-do, raised mainly in German émigré circles and assiduously fostered by French industrialists interested in Saar coal, enabled Hitler to claim more credit for the outcome than was probably due him and his régime.

Although one of the most troublesome questions connected with the disposition of the Saar had been settled by the Franco-German agreement of December 1934, fear of a Nazi *Putsch* before the voting could take place caused much tension. To insure order and to back the International Commission which had charge of the plebiscite, a contingent of British, Italian, Dutch, and Swedish troops under British command was sent to the Saar Valley in December. When the votes were finally counted, it was found that over ninety per cent of the voters had registered their desire to return to Germany. The League Council then made arrangements for the transfer of the territory on March 1 from League jurisdiction to the Reich. Counting upon Hitler's previous statements, it was hoped that the smooth working of the plebiscite and its outcome would contribute to better Franco-German relations, but the French themselves were inclined to be sceptical of this view, for in their eyes the settlement of such a territorial issue as the Saar meant little as long as Germany was bent upon increasing her military and economic power.

Nowhere was the hope that the Saar settlement meant peace stronger than in England where the center of diplomatic activity rested at the end of January 1935. British opinion was still hopelessly divided upon the solution of the problem of armament and security. Traditionalist Conservative sentiment tended to favor rearmament and to emphasize the limitation of British responsibilities in Europe to the West and the grant to Germany of a



free hand in the East. They could not appreciate the French Rightist view that the East should be used to counterbalance the center, for in the eyes of British Tories Germany in the center of Europe was a counterbalance to Russia in Asia, the real enemy of Great Britain. On the other hand, Liberals and Laborites were opposed to rearmament because under the influence of the strong pacifist movement they still believed that the soundest policy was that of constructing a collective security system which would permit a general limitation of arms. At the same time, however, they still honestly thought that Germany was entitled to sympathetic treatment. This was their only point of agreement with the Tories, although their reasoning was different. One group wanted a deal with Germany in order to make a better foundation for a peaceful order; the other wanted it for the sake of balance-of-power politics. The Government tried to please both sides by insisting that British rearmament was necessary in order that Great Britain could pull her proper weight in international affairs, and that collective security was desirable but impossible without the cooperation of all the Great Powers including Germany. However, since Germany would not reenter the League until she had equality in armament and France would not permit German rearmament until she had security, the logical solution was to guarantee French security in the West, let the East take care of itself, and then negotiate with Germany the legal limits of her rearmament.

Since French opinion, especially on the Right, still clung to an Eastern Locarno and no compromise with Germany, it was surprising that after only a three-day visit to London Premier Flandin and Foreign Minister Laval were able to conclude with the British Government a new plan for European peace. The Franco-British Declaration of February 3 — its importance underscored by the fact that the British Cabinet gave up its long week-end in order to approve it — embodied a scheme to bring Germany into a European security system. By it Britain heartily approved the Rome accord and specifically mentioned a threat to Austrian integrity and independence as a question on which she would consult with the other Powers. With respect to the general security problem, the Declaration stated that while no Power could take unilateral action with respect to armaments defined by the treaties, 'nothing would contribute more to the restoration of confidence and the prospects of peace among nations than a general settlement freely negotiated between Ger-

many and the other Powers.' The settlement as outlined combined French and British ideas: mutual-assistance pacts in Eastern Europe, and a new armament agreement with Germany replacing Part V of Versailles and enabling Germany to return to the League. In addition, and as the principal innovation of this agreement, Great Britain and France invited Belgium, Germany, and Italy to negotiate with them an air pact by which each would promise to assist with air forces anyone who might be the victim of an unprovoked aerial attack by another of the signatories.

This seemingly exclusive interest in the West and the omission of any direct mention of the U.S.S.R. led to the impression that fundamentally Britain, France, and Italy were attempting to resurrect the defunct Four-Power Pact. Another conclusion that was drawn from the agreement was that Britain had acknowledged her new dependence upon France arising from the danger of aerial warfare and thus could be expected to cooperate with France more closely than hitherto in matters of security. Thus, the mutual Franco-British pledge to consult together as soon as the replies of the other interested parties had been received was regarded as the basis of a new *Entente Cordiale*, although French doubts of British constancy were revived when British officials gave contradictory replies when asked whether or not Britain would make an air pact with France alone if Germany refused or withdrew from one. Furthermore, it was not at all certain that Italy, who reserved her judgment concerning the air pact, would subscribe to that part of the proposal. Belgium, however, accepted the Franco-British proposals 'in their entirety,' and the Soviet Union expressed its satisfaction with them, although it betrayed some anxiety about the consummation of the Eastern Pact.

In summary, the situation as a result of nearly a year of negotiation among the Powers amounted to this: France, Soviet Russia, and Czechoslovakia had laid the basis for a triplice in Eastern Europe; France, Italy, and Great Britain had agreed upon the independence of Austria, the promotion of a Central European bloc, and a negotiated rearmament of Germany; France, Great Britain, and Belgium in addition had agreed to supplement the Locarno Pacts of 1925 with an air pact. To cut beneath all these schemes, Germany was really being asked to accept the territorial *status quo* in return for the legalization of her rearmament which she was accomplishing anyway, and for

readmission to the League of Nations that Hitler had frequently denounced in contemptuous terms. The offer assumed, furthermore, that Nazi Germany would prefer a peaceable and orderly process of achieving equality to an illegal and forceful method. The offer to Germany was naïve; the assumption was incorrect.

#### *4. German Rearmament and the Stresa Front*

Germany received the Franco-British Declaration with great caution, merely promising on February 14 to examine 'the entire complex' and concurring explicitly with Britain and France only on the value of an air convention. What concerned Hitler most, though nobody in the Government said so, was to find out how solid the combination of Great Powers was and what risks Germany might incur by refusing to adhere to the various proposed pacts and principles. Probably with this in mind, the Government asked for a direct exchange of views with Great Britain. After France and Italy had consented and after the German Government on February 22 promised to examine all points in the February Declaration and not merely the air pact, Sir John Simon agreed to visit Berlin on March 7. On March 4, however, the British Government brought out a White Paper on rearmament which stated that German rearmament not only was the cause for the increases in British appropriations, but also, if continued, would imperil the general peace. The resultant explosion in Berlin led to a change of plans on all sides and to Germany's 'Saturday Surprise' of March 16.

Sir John's visit to Berlin was postponed because the Fuehrer had contracted such a cold that he could not see the British Minister. In London, Labor and Liberal circles condemned the issuance of the White Paper as a great diplomatic blunder because it had cut off the prospect of a settlement with Germany while peace crusaders showered pamphlets upon the floor of the House of Commons from the visitors' gallery. The Government on March 7 announced that Anthony Eden would visit Moscow, Warsaw, and Prague. Meanwhile, France and the Soviet were pleased at the turn of events, for they had feared that perhaps Great Britain might yield to German pressure and agree to modify the February Declaration on such points as the Eastern and Central European Pacts. The German Government, however, quickly recovered from its pique over the White Paper, and on March 9 invited Sir John to visit Berlin some time in the

future, although it set no date because Hitler had retired to Bavaria to cure his cold.

On the same day, Germany provided Europe with a foreshadowing of the next week's coup when she notified the Powers of the creation of an air force, a form of armament forbidden under the Versailles Treaty. On March 10, General Goering was proclaimed air chief. The next Saturday, March 16, while Paris, London, and Rome were still wondering what to do about the air force, Hitler announced the restoration of universal military service and the establishment of a peacetime army of 550,000 men. At last, Germany's frankness for which Great Britain had long been pleading revealed accomplishments and intentions that everyone except the most gullible had long suspected. The German announcement ended the period of transition from efforts at disarmament to those directed toward rearmament and, indeed, had been preceded by British, French, Italian, and Soviet rearmament programs. On the very morning of March 16, the French Parliament voted a law to increase the period of military training from one to two years. A quotation from one of Stanley Baldwin's speeches was used by the German Government to justify its action: 'A country unwilling to take the necessary precautions for its own defense will never have power in this world, either moral or material.' The Reich proclamation of conscription added, in explanation of its action, that it desired only 'the power to be capable of preserving the peace for the Reich and with it also for the whole of Europe.'<sup>7</sup>

Hitler's claims that German rearmament was merely an answer to the programs of other Powers, especially Soviet Russia and France, and that his armed forces would be used 'exclusively for defense and thereby for the maintenance of peace,' did not hide the fact that Germany had abrogated the military clauses of an international instrument, the Treaty of Versailles. What were Great Britain, France, and Italy, all of whom had just condemned unilateral treaty revision, to do about it? There was a choice of three courses: A preventive war against a still weak Germany; renewed efforts to block the Reich by regional mutual-assistance pacts; acceptance of the accomplished fact and another attempt to bring Germany into a security system on the basis of equality. The unsettled political and economic conditions that still existed all over Europe, the uncertain attitude of many states, and the popular aversion to war made the first choice

<sup>7</sup> Fritz Morstein-Marx, *Government in the Third Reich* (New York, 1936), pp. 11-12.

impossible. France, Italy, and the U.S.S.R. preferred the second. Great Britain, however, always hopeful that a little good-will would do the trick, chose the third course, and the other Powers, with ill-grace, let themselves be persuaded to follow her. The British policy was supported by many people for a reason that was best expressed by an American writer: 'The former allies blundered in the past by offering Germany too little, and offering even that too late. . . . They might at least consider the question whether generosity and promptness were not worth trying once, in a final effort to purchase Germany's agreement to labor for and not against peace.'<sup>8</sup>

After Great Britain had dispatched a mild protest to Berlin over Germany's unilateral action and Italy and France had expressed their views more vehemently, all three Powers in an effort to pull together agreed that Sir John Simon should go to Berlin, accompanied by Eden who should then proceed to Moscow, Warsaw, and Prague for 'exploratory' visits. The British Ministers were to make no commitments, but were merely to learn the views of Germany and the others and report them to a meeting of the three Powers at Stresa on April 11. France also addressed a note to the League of Nations asking for an extraordinary session of the Council to consider the situation, while Laval gave a hint of his future course when he announced that he had been invited by the Soviet Government to visit Moscow; but the absence of any threat to invoke military or other sanctions against Germany clearly indicated how far Paris had traveled from the spirit of the Ruhr occupation in 1923.

The French, Italian, and Soviet press opinions were undoubtedly right in concluding that the visit of Simon and Eden to Berlin, March 24-26, would be a waste of time. Sir John himself professed that he and Hitler were at odds on almost everything and seemed to have been shocked by Hitler's revelation of his military preparations and aims. Simon, however, did not make clear to the public just what Hitler had said except that he had proposed a multilateral non-aggression pact in place of the proposed Eastern Locarno and had expressed a desire for parity in the air with Britain and France, a rebuilt navy, and a return of the former German colonies.

Eden went on to Moscow where Litvinov, Molotov, and Stalin turned themselves inside out to be gracious to this eminently

<sup>8</sup> Allan Nevins, 'Germany disturbs the peace,' *Current History*, XLII (May 1935), 178.

respectable wearer of the old-school tie. They also did their best to convince him of the necessity for an 'indivisible peace' system and for the Eastern Pact, 'complete and unmodified.' In Warsaw, April 1-2, Eden received a cordial reception befitting the first British Minister to visit Poland since the World War, but found Polish statesmen still trying to strike a balance between Germany and France and unwilling to take any risk of becoming a battlefield for Russian and German armies. By the time he reached Prague on April 4, the Czechoslovak attitude and that of the other members of the Little Entente had become well known. Beneš was cooperating loyally with both France and the Soviet, and his partners had indicated their favorable consideration of the Central European Pact proposed at Rome.

Unfortunately, since Eden was compelled because of a heart attack to take to his bed upon returning to London, it was agreed that Sir John Simon and Premier Ramsay MacDonald should go to Stresa. This combination boded ill for the firmness and stability of British policy. Moreover, despite a strong speech in favor of collective security by Stanley Baldwin at Llandrinod on April 8 and Simon's indication in the House of Commons on the next day that there were important divergences of views between England and Germany, the English press, with Rothermere's papers taking the lead, harked back to the old cry of limited responsibility and the conciliation of Germany. At the same time the German press did its best, as it had been doing ever since March 16, to calm the alarm over German aggressiveness. Since Laval meanwhile was going ahead with discussions of a mutual-assistance pact with Russia and Czechoslovakia, and on April 9 sent a formal appeal to the League for action on German rearmament, the auspices for a united front at Stresa were not favorable. Scepticism concerning the outcome of the conference was well expressed on its opening day by an article in *Popolo d'Italia*, attributed to Mussolini himself. It predicted that neither war nor peace would come out of the meeting and sagely declared that lasting peace depended chiefly upon 'somebody who is not present in Stresa.' That 'somebody' was undoubtedly understood to be Adolf Hitler.

While the inside story of Stresa has not yet been revealed, something of what happened may be conjectured from the published documents and the final communiqué. It is obvious that the attitudes of both Germany and England were alarming to Laval who was now bent upon his pact with Russia. An inquiry

from Sir John Simon concerning the German attitude toward such mutual-assistance pacts as might be made outside the non-aggression treaty which Germany had offered at Berlin elicited the reply on April 12 that Germany would not oppose them, although the German Government still thought that they would not contribute to peace. This eased Laval's mind concerning a pact with the Soviet. Moreover, Laval obtained a reaffirmation by Italy and Great Britain of their loyalty to their Locarno obligations, which meant that they would be obliged to stand by France if Germany attempted to change the *status quo* in the Rhineland. The three Powers also agreed to pursue a common policy at the League Council in regard to German rearmament. Since England and Italy were unwilling to punish Germany, this decision meant that France had been compelled to accept a moderate and harmless program of merely rapping Germany's knuckles for violating the Treaty of Versailles.

For the rest, the communiqué of April 14 covered up by its 'masterly circumlocution' the failure of the three Powers to unite to the point of taking effective action. They decided to continue negotiations for a security pact in Eastern Europe, though it was obvious that Great Britain would not take part to the extent of making any new commitments. They confirmed their previous declarations concerning Austria, and recommended the Central European Pact to the states concerned. They agreed 'to continue actively the study' of the proposed air pact for Western Europe. In regard to armaments, they 'regretfully recognized that the method of unilateral repudiation adopted by the German Government . . . had undermined public confidence in the security of a peaceful order'; and they reaffirmed their desire to maintain peace and to join every practicable effort to promote international agreement on the limitation of armament. With respect to the armament restrictions on Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria, they decided to recommend to the members of the Little and Balkan Ententes an examination of this question with a view to its settlement by mutual agreement 'within the framework of general and regional guarantees of security.' Finally, the three Powers closed their deliberations with a condemnation of, and a promise to oppose, any unilateral denunciation of treaties. By this wordy but ineffective treatment of past unilateral denunciations, the Stresa Powers only encouraged Hitler whose example Mussolini obviously was already preparing to follow in his Ethiopian adventure, although that subject was not officially discussed at Stresa.

The League Council, under the domination of the Stresa Front, passed a resolution on April 17 censuring Germany and setting up a committee to find a better method for achieving security and for making more effective the application of sanctions to states which endanger peace. Denmark even abstained from the final vote on this mild action. In reply to the League, the German Foreign Minister rejected the resolution as an 'attempt at a new discrimination against Germany' and declared that at a later date Germany would make known her attitude toward the questions raised.

#### *5. The Franco-Soviet Pact and Hitler's Program*

Meanwhile, attention was directed to the Franco-Soviet mutual-assistance pact which Laval had mentioned at Stresa and had promised to reveal to his colleagues when it was drafted. French policy and the reasons for it were quite clear. The Anglo-French proposal of July 1934 had envisaged two pacts for Eastern Europe, a general multilateral non-aggression pact and a tripartite mutual-aid agreement of Germany, France, and the U.S.S.R., but that proposal had been killed by Germany and Poland. While Great Britain wanted Germany included in any general security arrangement, it had become clear that the British would not now oppose special pacts as long as they were compatible with the League Covenant. Moreover, Italy did not care what happened north of the Danube. Since the attitude of these two Powers had rendered the League incapable of applying sanctions against an aggressive Germany, the only remaining path to security for France lay in a mutual-assistance pact with the U.S.S.R.

Soviet Russia's policy was a little less clear. Ever since the Rome accord of January 7, the U.S.S.R. had had to face the possibility of a revamped Four-Power Pact or a Hitler free to move eastward. Therefore, the Soviet stressed the 'indivisibility' of peace and at the same time sought to make terms whenever possible with potential enemies. On January 28, Molotov reiterated Stalin's policy of dealing with any Power that would deal with Russia and specifically pointed out that it was not Germany's 'super-nationalistic' theories that stood in the way of good relations, but Hitler's schemes of eastern conquest. The same attitude was reflected in Soviet relations with Japan. Despite Moscow-inspired rumors concerning German-Japanese-



Polish intrigues, the Soviet Union completed the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway to Manchoukuo in a contract signed at Tokyo on March 23, and Litvinov publicly advocated an improvement in Soviet-Japanese relations. Although on March 17, the Profintern (Trade-Union International) had published an order to Communist agents abroad to organize non-Communist trade-unionists and other groups for united action against the 'common enemy,' Fascism, the Soviet Government completed a new trade agreement with Germany on April 9. Nevertheless, perhaps because the Soviet put no trust in the Fascist Powers, even though they were willing to make deals with Russia, Litvinov continued his pursuit of a mutual-assistance agreement with France.

The principal difficulty was to find a formula which would make the pact compatible not only with the League Covenant but also with the Locarno Treaty, for France could not afford to lose the assistance of Britain and Italy in the West. A satisfactory solution was at length found and a five-year pact signed at Paris on May 2. By the terms of the treaty, the two parties were to consult one another in conformity with Article X of the League Covenant in case of a threat of aggression; they would come to each other's assistance in case of an unprovoked attack and a failure of the League Council to reach a unanimous decision concerning the aggressor; they would employ the same measures as those described in Article XVI of the Covenant. A protocol signed at the same time as the treaty explained that the pledge of mutual aid applied only to violations of Soviet Russian or French territory, and that the pact in no way invalidated previous agreements to which either Power was a party — a reference to French commitments in the Locarno Pacts. Moreover, the protocol recalled that negotiations for the Franco-Soviet treaty were 'primarily entered upon in order to complete a security agreement comprising all countries of North-eastern Europe.' More significant was the further declaration that the obligation to assist one another would be valid only within the limits of the proposed German-French-Soviet mutual-assistance pact of 1934, that is, only in the event that either party were attacked by Germany.

Because the pact was defensive and was open to the adherence of other Powers, including Germany, the signatories argued that it was not an exact counterpart of the pre-war alliance of France and Russia. Furthermore, since the pact was so filled with

restrictions concerning French aid to Russia and since the Soviet's geographical position was such that it could be of little help to France without Polish adherence, many wondered why either party wanted the pact. On this point Laval was reported to have told the Poles that its purpose was not so much to secure Russian assistance as to 'forestall the possibility that Russia and Germany might come to terms with one another.'<sup>9</sup>

Although Laval tried in vain to persuade Poland to adhere to the pact when he visited Warsaw on his way to Russia in mid-May, he found Foreign Minister Beck as unwilling as ever to risk the displeasure of Germany. The death of Pilsudski on May 12 did not affect Polish policy in this regard. On the other hand, after Laval had left Moscow, where he had enjoyed a cordial reception, Czechoslovakia on May 16 signed a mutual-assistance pact with the Soviet similar to the Franco-Soviet one. A Czechoslovak-Soviet trade agreement of June 4 and a visit to Moscow by Beneš in July, when the coordination of defense was discussed, further cemented the cordial relations of the two Slav countries, thus compensating in part for the failure of Poland to enter the combination. Despite Laval's dilatoriness in bringing the Soviet treaty before the French Parliament for ratification, a virtual French-Czech-Soviet triplice had been created.

The question that now arose was what would be Germany's attitude toward this development. At Moscow, Laval and Litvinov had jointly invited both Germany and Poland to negotiate a multilateral non-aggression agreement along the lines which Hitler had suggested to Simon. In addition, both Poland and the Baltic Entente had clearly indicated that they would not enter an Eastern Locarno without German participation. On May 2 and 3, Prime Minister MacDonald and Sir John Simon, arguing that there was no incompatibility between the Franco-Soviet Pact and Hitler's proposals of March, had urged Germany to take some definite step toward the formulation of such a pact as Hitler had declared his willingness to join. However, the German Ambassador in London indicated on May 10 the general line which Germany was subsequently to take, when he complained that the Franco-Soviet Pact was inconsistent with the Locarno Treaty and that its phrasing was 'hypocritical' since it was designed to hide the fact that the pact was a military alliance against Germany.

At length on May 21, before a special session of the Reichstag,

<sup>9</sup> *Survey of International Affairs, 1935, I, 83.*

Hitler gave a formal and complete exposition of Germany's foreign policy. After the usual vehement protestations of Germany's desire for peace and equality, her loyal fulfillment of her obligations, and the guilt of other Powers in breaking the Versailles Treaty, he launched into a long attack on Communism. He omitted any mention of his recent trade pact with the U.S.S.R., and apparently hoped to rally the conservative elements in France and England to oppose a security system involving the Soviet. Hitler also indulged in a shorter diatribe against Lithuania; criticized the Franco-Soviet Pact, alleging that it brought 'an element of legal insecurity' into the Locarno Pact; then denied that Germany intended or wished 'to interfere in the internal affairs of Austria, to annex Austria, or to conclude an "Anschluss."' "

Finally, Hitler gave a 'more precise summing up of the present issues' under thirteen heads: (1) Germany rejected the 'Geneva resolution of April 17' which had censured her for treaty-breaking. (2) Although Germany had renounced the disarmament obligations of Versailles, as other Powers had done first, she would respect the territorial provisions. (3) Germany would sign no treaty that seemed incapable of fulfillment, but would uphold those voluntarily signed, including the Locarno Treaty, 'so long as the other partners on their side are ready to stand by that pact.' (4) Germany would participate in a system of collective cooperation safeguarding peace, but must have the way left open for treaty revision. (5) This cooperation could not be achieved by the imposition of conditions unilaterally, nor all at once, but should be brought about step by step. (6) Germany was ready 'in principle' to conclude pacts of non-aggression with neighbor states and to supplement them with provisions intended to isolate the warmaker and localize war. (7) The German Government was prepared to supplement the Locarno Treaty with an air agreement. (8) Germany was willing to limit armaments to any degree accepted by other Powers and had already made known her intentions with regard to air armaments and the navy. Answering the charge that this was only a beginning and that his demands would increase, Hitler said, 'The German Government hereby makes the binding declaration: *For Germany this demand is final and abiding.*' (9, 10, 11) Germany would take an active part in efforts toward a practical limitation of armament, would abolish the heavier arms suited for aggression, and would agree to any limitation whatever of artillery, battleships, cruisers, and

torpedo boats. (12) The German Government also recommended international agreements to 'prevent the poisoning of public opinion among the nations by irresponsible elements.' (13) Also, Hitler was ready to reach an international agreement preventing 'all attempts at outside interference in the affairs of other states.' In short, there was little that the Fuehrer did not profess himself willing to do in order to preserve international peace and unity, except to join the League or any multilateral pact with teeth in it such as that proposed by France and Russia. Only an unregenerate warmonger could look upon Hitler's speech as anything but conciliatory, and yet very little was accomplished as a result of it. Only the question of naval rearmament received serious attention.

#### *6. Anglo-German Naval Agreement*

Great Britain had been concerned over the naval question ever since Simon's visit to Berlin in March. At that time, and subsequently, Hitler had gone out of his way to indicate not only a desire for friendship with Great Britain but also for a naval pact. Knowledge that Germany had ordered the construction of new submarines and had reopened two submarine schools spurred the British Government to action in the hope of preventing another 'Saturday Surprise' like that of March by an agreement upon the extent of German naval building. Additional reasons for such action lay in the insistence of Labor and Liberal groups upon further efforts to limit armament and in the real fear that a naval race was impending as a result of Japanese and Italian plans. The Government therefore seized with alacrity upon Hitler's offer to limit the German Navy to 35 per cent of the British tonnage.

Anglo-German negotiations began on June 4 when Ribbentrop arrived in London to represent the Reich, but were interrupted by the change of British Government on June 7, when Ramsay MacDonald was succeeded by Baldwin and Sir Samuel Hoare took Sir John Simon's place at the Foreign Office. On June 17, the French Government sent a very critical note in reply to a notice of the proposed agreement, but this did not deter the British Government from concluding a naval agreement with Germany by an exchange of notes on June 18. In view of the Government's previous assertion that negotiations would be only informal and preliminary to a later treaty, the

'permanent and definite agreement' with Germany came as a great surprise to the public. It was justified by the British Government on the grounds that it would 'facilitate the conclusion of a general agreement on the subject of naval limitation' and would contribute to the preservation of peace by preventing an Anglo-German naval race such as that prior to 1914.

By the terms of the agreement, the ratio of 35 to 100 was to be a 'permanent' relationship, and Germany was to adhere to it 'in all circumstances,' which was interpreted to mean that the ratio would 'not be affected by the construction of other Powers.' Germany was to apply this ratio to each category of naval vessels, except that she might vary it according to any arrangement agreed upon at a future naval conference or, failing such an event, according to an agreement arrived at with Great Britain as long as the total German tonnage did not exceed 35 per cent of the total British tonnage. Not made public at the time was a 'Gentleman's Agreement' to the effect that Germany would not build more than three heavy cruisers, although she was entitled to five. This was terminated in 1937 when Germany claimed that Russian cruiser building made it necessary for Germany to have the five to which she was entitled.

France keenly resented the Anglo-German Naval Agreement as a blow at collective security, for Britain had allowed Germany to deal bilaterally with a matter of multiparty concern. Both France and the U.S.S.R. pointed out that whereas the British fleet was scattered over the seven seas, the German Navy would be so concentrated as to constitute a danger to all the Baltic and North Sea nations who would thus be compelled to build up their navies. Despite assurances of Eden, sent to Paris and Rome post-haste, France felt that Britain had cracked the Stresa Front upon which they had based high hopes of keeping Germany in check. Italy resented the British action, too, but Mussolini hoped to profit from British willingness to make deals with dictators. He saw no reason why London should not display the same 'realism' toward his Ethiopian adventure as it had toward the German naval armament. Although the British Government made an effort later to recover a moral basis for its foreign policy, its naval agreement with Germany thus inevitably resulted in a general lowering of the international standards of conduct toward the level of totalitarian diplomacy.

Up to the end of June 1935 the principal preoccupation of Europe had been the resurgence of Germany as a military power.

The Nazi régime had come to be regarded as a constant source of danger, but no country, from Britain on the west to Soviet Russia on the east, had adopted on specific issues a consistent policy supported by a united public opinion. Everywhere there were those who wanted to come to terms with Germany and those who felt that firm action would check the Nazi threat. Moreover, while liberals and progressives wanted a collective security system under the aegis of the League, conservatives instinctively reverted to power politics. Consequently both methods were pursued, alternately or side by side, with the result that neither the League system nor an alliance system was successfully constructed. Nothing better illustrated this fatal weakness in the European security system than the Ethiopian crisis in the summer of 1935. It was to prove that even the will to establish an order of genuine peace and justice was lacking and that the future lay open to the 'dynamic' aggressors.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ITALY AND ETHIOPIA, 1935-36

UP TO 1935 there had been no case of aggression by a European Power against the territorial integrity of a League member. Although Germany had quit the Disarmament Conference and repudiated a section of the Versailles Treaty with impunity, she had not abrogated any territorial provisions of the peace treaty. Outside Europe, Japan had invaded China without serious check, thus demonstrating that victory belonged to the strong who dared push aside paper pacts backed only by world opinion. In the Chaco, South American Powers had waged war despite all efforts to stop them. But these events had occurred in out-of-the-way places. It remained for Mussolini to bring home to Europe the problem of how to handle a 'have-not' Great Power bent upon territorial aggrandizement. The failure to solve the problem helped to bring to its doom the post-war peace system.

#### *1. Why Mussolini Wanted Colonies*

The excuses offered for Italian expansion by Mussolini and his apologists had been formulated for at least a decade. Some of them had already become the stock in trade of every nation that considered itself to be a 'have-not' Power — a term taken over from the vocabulary of class-struggle in the early twentieth century and by 1935 a familiar phrase in the discussions of international relations. Like Japan, Italy claimed to be overcrowded with her population growing by half a million a year and with avenues of migration cut off to her. It mattered not that the birth rate had been slowly diminishing ever since 1922;<sup>1</sup> nor that the Fascists themselves urged larger families and discouraged

<sup>1</sup> *Il Popolo d'Italia* pointed out in February 1935 that the decline in the birth rate since 1922 amounted in the aggregate to the loss of 2,370,000 or four times that of Italy as a result of the World War. (See *Current History*, April 1935, p. 93.) Despite a lower death rate, Italy's excess of births over deaths, 1932-35, averaged but 409,000. Unless fertility increases again, Italy will not reach 50 million in 1950, far short of the 60 million Mussolini once talked about. R. R. Kuczynski, *'Living Space' and Population Problems (Pamphlets on World Affairs, New York, 1939)*, p. 12.

emigration to other than Italian lands because of the loss to Italy of valuable man-power. The slogan, 'Italy must expand or explode,' was too useful to discard.

Her second excuse for the development of empire was the lack of raw materials and foodstuffs. It was true that Italy had little coal, no oil, very little iron, and almost none of the other basic materials of modern industry. It was equally true that she could barely raise enough foodstuffs for her own consumption. That the world, ever since the beginning of the economic depression, was glutted with cheap raw materials and agricultural products scarcely helped Italy because she lacked the means to pay for imports. A further point in favor of the Italian argument concerning raw materials was that, in times of stress, imperial countries favor their own nationals over foreign investors and buyers by means of such controls as tariffs and quota arrangements. The experience of other Great Powers had proved, however, that the possession of colonies was of little value unless the home country had an efficient and highly developed industrial structure. Without it, Italy could scarcely hope to better her economic well-being even if she could conquer a land rich in raw materials.

Finally, in claiming that she had been badly treated by her erstwhile allies at the close of the World War, Italy offered a justification for her expansion policy which was peculiar to her own case. By the secret Treaty of London of 1915, Italy had been promised a share with Great Britain and France in a redistribution of colonies should the Ottoman and German Empires be broken up. But the nationalist revival in Turkey had thwarted Italian ambitions there, while the mandate principle had enabled France and Great Britain to argue that they were not profiting by the break-up of empires, but were acting as trustees on behalf of the League of Nations. This was sheer hypocrisy to the Italians, who pointed out that of Germany's African colonies, 42 per cent went to the British Empire, 33 per cent to France, and 25 per cent to Belgium, while not a square inch went to Italy, although she had contributed 5,500,000 soldiers to the cause and contracted a debt of one hundred billion lire.<sup>2</sup> Great Britain in 1925, after much haggling, did cede Italy some strips of sand which were added to Libya and to Italian Somaliland. Up to 1935, France had only granted Italy small strips of territory on the Libyan-Tunisian border and

<sup>2</sup> Antonio Cippico, *Italy, the Central Problem of the Mediterranean* (New Haven, 1926), p. 36.



in the same period had adopted a policy of assimilating the Italians in Tunis, which Italy resented deeply. By the Rome agreement of January 7, 1935, Laval straightened out the Tunisian question and agreed to transfer to Italy some more desert regions in North Africa and the strategic island of Doumerrah in the Red Sea. Even though these and other concessions were grudgingly made, there is no doubt that the problem of the 'dirty deal,' like that of overpopulation and lack of raw materials, could have been worked out by peaceful means, though it would have taken longer.

The reasons why Mussolini chose to remedy these ills by a policy of conquest rather than by one of peaceful negotiation and diplomacy seemed to lie primarily in Fascist ideology and in the exigencies of economic and political pressure. He and his fellow Fascists had always emphasized the brawny virtues. Except for a brief period, which began with the preparations for the Disarmament Conference and lasted through its first phase in 1932, they had exalted war as the natural occupation of virile men and had belittled peace as unworthy of Fascist dynamics. Even the attempts to solve internal problems were described as 'battles' of which one of the best known examples was the 'Battle of Wheat' waged to free Italy from dependence upon imports. 'Better live as a lion one day than one hundred years as a sheep,' declared the Duce in May 1935. Furthermore, Mussolini had made promises which he had to attempt to fulfill. A general one was embodied in the aim to rebuild the Roman Empire which the Fascists looked back upon as the great and glorious inspiration for their own way of life. More specifically, on May 26, 1927, when urging the necessity of military preparedness, Mussolini had declared: 'When, between 1935 and 1940, we shall find ourselves at a point which I shall call a crucial point in European history, we shall be in a position to make our voice felt and to see, at least, our rights recognized.' In 1934 and 1935, he left no doubt that the voice was to be felt because of military might.

Beyond the doctrine of force and the glorification of military might lay the ultimate objective of prestige. Mussolini's whole life had been characterized by the egotistical desire to place himself in the forefront, whether through his connection with Socialism in his earlier years, or with the Fascist movement of his later life. This ambition, transferred to the foreign policy of the state at whose head he stood, found a ready support among a

people who since 1870 had been recognized theoretically as a first-rate Power, but had never in fact been treated as one. When in the years 1925-32 the League of Nations seemed solidly established, prestige could be gained by cooperation with Geneva. After 1932, however, and particularly in 1933 and 1934, the League's star was waning. Since no one heeded Mussolini's advice to reform the League — his favorite plan would have placed Italy among the Four-Power group that was to dictate League policies — he turned against its principles and back to his favorite theme of military ascendancy. After all, he reasoned, every other great world Power had won its position and its empire by the sword. If now the others renounced that method, it was not because they were more moral, but simply because they were satiated. A struggling 'young' nation like Italy had every reason to follow the road the others had taken to power and glory.

What part political currents and economic problems within Italy may have played in the decision to adopt a policy of expansion it is difficult to say. Undoubtedly, the younger supporters of Fascism, brought up in its doctrines, were restless and ready for excitement. To be sure, economic conditions were bad and required the adoption of a policy different from that which Italy had been pursuing. The 'Battle of Wheat' had been won and Italy made self-sufficient by providing wheat that cost three times as much in 1932 as available foreign-grown wheat. Her industrial recovery after 1932 had been less impressive than England's or Germany's. Mussolini's desire to maintain the prestige of the lira had led him to stabilize it at too high a figure in 1927, thus causing Italian production costs to be high relative to the international price level and particularly affecting the export trades adversely. This situation was aggravated by the fall in world prices after 1929 and by the departure of Great Britain and others from the gold standard. Mussolini was forced into a deflationary policy in order to avoid devaluation, the sensible but, from his standpoint, shameful course. Wages, salaries, rents, and rates of interest were cut by government decrees in amounts varying from 10 to 40 per cent in the years between 1928 and 1934. The resultant social distress led to such reflationary measures as the public works program of 1933-34. But this only served to aggravate the situation by helping to keep prices up, to check exports, to stimulate imports, and to encourage an outward flow of gold. Decrees restricting or placing

under government control foreign exchange, foreign securities, and imports were of so little avail that at long last, in July 1935, Italy was forced to leave the gold standard. At the same time deficits were piling up in the budget, and foreign credit was exhausted.

It is possible that Mussolini considered a colonial adventure as a way out of these economic difficulties and a means of overcoming discontent. Nevertheless, the rôle of economic conditions in his decision to wage war can easily be overestimated. Certainly as significant was the possibility through foreign conquests of providing Fascist youths with the opportunity for laying the cornerstone of the new *Imperium Romanum*. This was but part of that all-important ambition to win for Italy both power and prestige in a world that was frankly reverting to the standards which had never been more than half concealed behind the verbiage about 'the new world order.'

## 2. *Italy, Ethiopia, and the Powers*

Nor was the choice of the country to be attacked primarily determined by economic motives, but rather by historical and geographical factors. Ethiopia, the ancient name that Haile Selassie preferred in place of Abyssinia, which meant the 'land of mixed peoples,' had long been regarded as a happy hunting ground for European exploiters. Probably its potential agricultural production and unworked mineral resources of iron, coal, and oil had been greatly exaggerated. The mild climate of the plateau region was certainly suitable for European colonization, but its native population, estimated at about five million and living under feudal conditions, had fiercely resisted European domination. They had never been successfully unified, however, and Haile Selassie, *Negus Negasti* or King of Kings since July 1931, had only begun the task of political centralization and of developing a modern state and nation.

Much more effective than either Ethiopian people or their Government in preventing the domination of a European Power had been the rivalry among the three most interested nations — Great Britain, France, and Italy. In each case imperialistic designs upon the region went back to the middle of the nineteenth century, when, for the sake of trade or military objectives, all three acquired footholds on the Red Sea coast which were later developed into the colonies of Eritrea, belonging to Italy; French

Somaliland, embracing the principal outlet for Ethiopia at the port of Djibouti; and British Somaliland, controlling the Straits of Aden between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. British occupation of Egypt, begun in 1881, her conquest of the Sudan in 1896-98, and her acquisition in the same period of British East Africa and Uganda, hemmed in Ethiopia on the west and south. Italy completed the ring of European holdings by acquiring Italian Somaliland on the east, without, however, coming to any agreement with Ethiopia over exact boundaries.

Italy's ambitions, which had gone far beyond mere coastal holdings, received the encouragement of Great Britain, who up to 1899 regarded France as her most dangerous rival. In 1889, Italy made the Treaty of Uccialli with King Menelik of Shoa by which, in return for supporting his aspirations to the Ethiopian throne, Italy believed she had secured a protectorate over Ethiopia. When, however, she attempted to make good her claims, her army was so disastrously defeated by Menelik's forces at Adowa in 1896, that in a subsequent treaty Italy was forced to recognize Ethiopia as a sovereign state. Revenge for Adowa was an element in Mussolini's prestige politics forty years later.

The settlement, 1898-1902, of Franco-British rivalries over the sources of the Nile, as well as the rapprochement of Italy and France at the same time, made possible the virtual division of Ethiopia into spheres of influence by the Treaty of 1906. France had already gained a concession from Menelik for building a railway from Djibouti to Addis Ababa, capital of Ethiopia. Great Britain had secured recognition of her interests in the Lake Tsana region, source of the Blue Nile waters and hence of vital concern to Egypt. Besides accepting these special interests, the Treaty of 1906 recognized Italy's sphere to be in the lands connecting her colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland and extending to the west of Addis Ababa. Italy was to assist in the construction of any railway in this region, should Ethiopia require foreign assistance. Finally, all three Powers agreed to respect the *status quo*, and, should it be disturbed, to 'make every effort to preserve the integrity of Ethiopia.'

Since Menelik was not a party to the 1906 Treaty, Italy attempted to obtain acknowledgment from him and his successors of those special interests France and England had conceded her. Italy and Ethiopia signed a treaty of commerce in 1906 as well as conventions in 1908 which defined the boundaries between Eritrea, Italian Somaliland, and Ethiopia, although the actual task of demarcation was never completed.

After the World War, Italy made a bargain with Great Britain by which the latter supported the project of an Italian-built railway west of Addis Ababa in return for help in obtaining a concession to dam the outlet of Lake Tsana and to build a motor road from the Sudan to it. Nevertheless, with French support, which had already enabled her to join the League of Nations in 1923, Ethiopia blocked both designs. Despite this check Mussolini, in 1928, negotiated with the *Negus* a treaty of peace and friendship by which each promised not to injure or prejudice the independence of the other, to promote trade, and to submit any disputes to a procedure of conciliation and arbitration 'without having recourse to armed force.' The Duce also secured a convention by which, in return for free zone facilities in the Eritrean port of Assab, Ethiopia granted Italy a concession to build a motor road from Assab to Dessie, a little more than half the way from the Eritrean frontier to Addis Ababa, but this convention was never fulfilled. Thus, Mussolini, in addition to the pledges not to go to war under the League Covenant and the Kellogg-Briand Pact, was legally bound to France and Great Britain not to disturb the *status quo* in Ethiopia, and to Ethiopia to accept conciliation procedure in case of disputes with her. No one could have been more pact-bound, but Mussolini boldly decided to brush such obligations aside.

Just when his mind was made up to secure control of Ethiopia is not clear, although General de Bono indicated the autumn of 1933 — a plausible time, because the rise of Hitler made an Italian move more urgent lest an ultimately strong Germany keep Italian troops occupied in Europe. Moreover, fear of Germany might make Great Britain and France more compliant to Italian wishes. On March 18, 1934, Mussolini declared: 'There is no question of territorial conquests . . . but of a natural expansion which ought to lead to collaboration between Italy and the peoples of the Near and Middle East. Italy in the first place is able to civilize Africa, and her position in the Mediterranean gives her the right and duty to accomplish this task. We demand no privileges or monopolies, but we require and wish those who are satiated and who desire to retain their possessions to refrain from blocking the cultural, political, and economic expansion of Italy.'<sup>3</sup> Thus, the Duce was clearly thinking of Ethiopia in March. By September, troop movements and other activities in

<sup>3</sup> M. H. H. Macartney and Paul Cremona, *Italy's Foreign and Colonial Policy, 1917-1937* (New York, 1938), p. 296.

Eritrea made it clear that preparations for Italy's 'natural expansion' and civilizing mission were definitely under way.

Plenty of excuses could be found by Italy for attacking Ethiopia. Most of them could be taken from the record book of any colonizing Power. After the crisis developed, Italian propagandists overdid the matter, for, besides alleging Ethiopia's breach of the 1928 contract, annoyance from marauding raids into Italian territories (true enough), and Italy's civilizing mission among backward and barbarous peoples (which the Ethiopians were), they actually claimed that Italy was obliged to attack Ethiopia in self-defense — that the *Negus* was preparing to conquer Italian colonies. This attempt to picture Fascist Italy as the innocent victim of a poor, weak Ethiopian monarch who could not even command the loyalty of all his feudal vassals nor equip his troops with modern weapons was a little ridiculous. For that reason, such allegations had little weight in shaping world opinion or winning acquiescence for the Italian attack upon Ethiopia from France and Great Britain whose susceptibilities Mussolini had to consider.

Since Mussolini regarded the League of Nations as too moribund to be of any account after its failures in dealing with Japan, the Chaco, and German armament, his main problem was either to get the acquiescence of France and England or render them impotent to stop him. In dealing with France he realized that her fear of Germany and her willingness, under the direction of Barthou and Laval, to play power politics gave him an opportunity not to be missed. The general terms of the Rome accord of January 7, 1935, between Mussolini and Laval have already been discussed. Yet, just what Laval promised Mussolini concerning Ethiopia in addition to the published concession of the right to purchase twenty-five hundred shares in the French-controlled Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway is still an unsolved question. The subsequent behavior of Laval led to the suspicion that he had given Mussolini *carte blanche* as long as the latter respected established French economic interests. Laval himself publicly disclaimed any such bargain at least four times before the end of 1935, and Mussolini, according to an interview in the *Petit Parisien* of September 29, denied it as well, although according to another report the Duce insisted that Laval had told him he could do in Ethiopia as the French had done in Morocco. Laval admitted only that he had conceded Mussolini the right to seek economic concessions anywhere in Ethiopia outside a

zone along the Djibouti railway, but had no idea that the latter contemplated any aggressive action.

Probably de Bono is correct in stating that 'conversations with M. Laval led us to hope that, so far as France was concerned, no obstacles would be placed in our path in any eventual action we should take against Abyssinia.' This statement no doubt meant that Laval was obviously so eager to get Italian support against Germany that Mussolini concluded he would pay anything for it. Then, too, as Laval had not made great sacrifices in the Rome agreement with Italy, Mussolini, as Italian writers have argued, could expect favors from France at this point.<sup>4</sup>

These were undoubtedly correct assumptions concerning the French, as well as Laval's feeling about Ethiopia. So scared were they of the German threat that they were willing not only to forget their dislike of Fascism, but also turn their backs upon Italian colonial ventures in Africa in order to secure Italian support in Europe. Quite cordial relations developed in all fields. A provisional commercial agreement was signed in April. A French mission to Rome in May signed a number of air conventions; the navy visited Italian waters; Generals Gamelin and Badoglio exchanged visits in July and September to discuss military matters. The French press of the Right was cordial toward Italy, and even the Left was not unkind. Realization of the urgency of winning Italian backing in Europe reached a high point in June when the Anglo-German Naval Treaty was signed and Mussolini let it be known that he might make a deal with Germany over Austria. Even after the crisis over Ethiopia had become acute, the Rightist press of France, perhaps encouraged by the sixty million francs Mussolini reputedly spent on it, continued to repeat approvingly the pro-Italian arguments and to treat Italy tenderly.

Meanwhile, Great Britain proved to be the unanticipated stumbling-block in the way both of Mussolini and his French sympathizers. In her case, although there was no formal accord, Mussolini had every reason to believe that she would offer no resistance to his plans. The British Government, certainly aware of the threatening situation in Ethiopia by January 1935, was asked by the Italian Government toward the end of that month what the 'nature and extent of British interests' in Ethiopia were.

<sup>4</sup> It is also possible that Laval may have made a pledge of non-interference in an Italo-Ethiopian conflict after the Rome visit but before January 27. Cf. William E. Lingelbach, 'War-Stained Italy,' *Current History*, XLIV (April 1936), 65.

While, according to Mr. Eden, no specific reply was made to Italy, a special committee was set up under the chairmanship of Sir John Maffey, Permanent Under-Secretary for Colonies, to discover the facts. The report, made on June 18, revealed that 'there was no important British interest in Abyssinia with the exception of Lake Tsana, the waters of the Blue Nile, and certain tribal grazing rights.'<sup>5</sup>

Whether or not the British Ministers placed much reliance upon the findings of this committee, they certainly acted throughout the first half of 1935 as if they agreed with them, and what is more, seemed to care little about their obligations toward the League of Nations in relation to the Italo-Ethiopian dispute.<sup>6</sup> On this latter point the Government's policy appeared to coincide with the views of a group in England, composed of both pacifists on the Left and traditionalists on the Right, which held that a war among European nations was to be avoided at all costs as a greater disaster than the failure of the League Covenant's machinery for guaranteeing peace. Evidence that the Government shared this opinion lay in the fact that, despite Ethiopia's appeals to the League, Great Britain negotiated with Italy, along with other Powers, over the German armament problem throughout February, March, and April without apparently raising any troublesome questions over Italy's African ambitions or even answering the latter's inquiries. Furthermore, at Stresa, where Ramsay MacDonald and Sir John Simon enjoyed Mussolini's hospitality, Ethiopia was not officially discussed. It is little wonder, then, if Mussolini concluded that the British Lion was peacefully and purposely dozing.

There was, however, a considerable body of opinion in England that believed the hope of the future lay in the development and maintenance of a strong League of Nations capable of checking aggression and punishing aggressors. The existence of this view and its political significance were forcibly brought home to the Government by the final announcement on June 27, 1935,

<sup>5</sup> This is Eden's statement of the conclusions. Gayda, who first brought this report to public attention in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, summarized them in slightly different terms, though the sense was much the same. See *Survey of International Affairs, 1935*, II, 43.

<sup>6</sup> The British White Paper on Defence, March 3, 1936, declared that the Government warned Italy as early as February of their 'anxiety' over the course being followed by Italy, but does not indicate that these warnings were of a very serious character or involved the League. *Speeches and Documents on International Affairs*, A. B. Keith, ed. (New York, 1938), II, 104.



of figures on the 'Peace Ballot' which had been conducted since November 1934 by a number of private organizations under the leadership of the League of Nations Union, itself a private organization. A total of 11,559,165, or about 38 per cent of the total number of voters in Great Britain and North Ireland, recorded their opinions on five questions. Of these, 96 per cent voted 'Yes' on the question, 'Should Great Britain remain a member of the League of Nations?' On the second question, 'Are you in favor of an all-round reduction in armaments by international agreement?' about 90 per cent voted in the affirmative. Almost the same number favored the fourth question on the abolition by international agreement of private manufacture and sale of armaments; and only a few less (over 82 per cent) favored the abolition of national military and naval aircraft, as put in question three. Most significant in relation to the Italo-Ethiopian crisis were the returns on the fifth question, 'Do you consider that, if a nation insists on attacking another, the other nations should combine to compel it to stop by (a) Economic and non-military measures? (b) If necessary, military measures?' On 5a, 10,027,608, or 87 per cent, voted 'Yes'; and, surprisingly enough in view of the anti-war sentiment indicated by the vote on questions three and four, 6,784,368, or about 59 per cent of the total, voted in the affirmative on 5b. Nearly two and a half million voters either left this question blank or registered doubt. But it is significant that of those who cast a vote on 5b, 74 per cent were in favor of military sanctions.

Although members of the Government and Conservatives had branded the ballot as futile and misleading ever since it was first proposed in July 1934, no one could ignore either the unprecedented achievement in getting so many votes or the unmistakable trend of voter opinion. Moreover, the publication of the returns, coinciding as it did with the heightening of Italo-Ethiopian tension in July, was followed by an unusual display of opinion in favor of upholding the Covenant from such prominent national leaders as the Archbishop of Canterbury and the famous colonial administrator, Lord Lugard. It is little wonder then that a Government which was expecting to face the electorate within a few months came out strongly in favor of upholding the League's authority, a position definitely announced by Prime Minister Baldwin on July 23 in a speech to the deputation which formally laid before him the results of the balloting.

Nevertheless, clamor for appeasement from Right-Wing Con-

servatives, with whom a few members of the Government plainly sympathized, deprecation of any action which might incur the risk of war from such prominent and convinced pacifists as George Lansbury, a veteran Labor Leader, and the attitude of France hampered the whole-hearted fulfillment of a sanctionist policy which the majority of Englishmen obviously desired. A Government which had just refused to consider sanctions against German rearmament and had signed a bilateral naval treaty, preeminently a matter of international concern, could scarcely stand forth convincingly as the White Knight of collective security. Thus, when Great Britain, to the annoyance of France and Italy, took the leadership in a policy of opposition to Italy's aggression in Ethiopia, she could neither escape the charge of hypocrisy which inevitably weakened her influence, nor pursue her belatedly announced goal with the singleness of purpose which was necessary for success. Still, it was Great Britain rather than the traditional champion of the League Covenant, France, who upset Mussolini's calculations for an unimpeded colonial war.

### *3. Wal Wal, Arbitration, and the League*

The incident proffered as the occasion for Italian accusations against Ethiopia occurred on December 5, 1934, at Wal Wal on the borders of Italian Somaliland where fighting broke out between Italian and Ethiopian soldiers. This was but the culmination of a series of occurrences which had caused both Governments as early as September 29 to deny rumors of preparations for a forthcoming armed conflict. Wal Wal lay in a region where the boundary lines had never been demarcated, but where Italy, with neither a formal recognition of sovereignty nor a protest from Ethiopia, had been in control since 1928. The clash at this point was clearly a case for the arbitration and conciliation procedure agreed upon in the Treaty of 1928, and now proposed by Haile Selassie. Mussolini, however, refused arbitration and demanded reparation. Ethiopia then called to the attention of the League the tense situation in a telegram of December 14; Italy gave her version on December 16. Although the exchange of communications continued, further clashes occurred between Italians and Ethiopians which led to a formal appeal by Haile Selassie to the League for action in accordance with Article XI of the Covenant. This Article made war or the threat of war

the concern of all members, obligated the League to take any action 'deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations,' and required the Council to meet forthwith. At its regular January meeting, however, the Council failed to act, professing to believe that a settlement could and would be arrived at by direct negotiations between Italy and Ethiopia.

On March 17, Haile Selassie, declaring that, 'in consequence of the mobilization' ordered by Italy and of the 'continual despatch of troops and war material' to the Ethiopian frontier, there now existed a 'dispute likely to lead to a rupture,' appealed more urgently to the League for a full investigation in accordance with Article XV of the Covenant. Since Italy objected to such a move on the ground that the procedure set forth in the Treaty of 1928 should be followed, and in addition alleged that her preparations were merely defensive in view of Ethiopian military measures, the Council was only too glad for another excuse to postpone discussing the dispute. After all, the Stresa Front including Italy was a more important consideration than Ethiopia for both Great Britain and France. Moreover, popular feeling in favor of League action had not yet made itself apparent.

Up to the middle of May, all that had been accomplished by negotiations between Italy and Ethiopia and by the pacific efforts of France and Great Britain acting outside the League framework was the establishment of a neutral zone between Italian and Ethiopian forces in the Wal Wal region, and the designation of two representatives by each of the countries to an arbitration commission. But since Italy refused to recognize Haile Selassie's appointees on the grounds that they were not Ethiopian nationals, another deadlock ensued. By this time, no one could longer doubt that Mussolini was bent upon another objective than that of obtaining satisfaction over the Wal Wal incident. He had mobilized three classes of trained men and sent several divisions to East Africa; his Under-Secretary for Air boasted of the planes which were ready to fly at a moment's notice; his Under-Secretary for Colonies declared early in May that the time had come to settle relations with Abyssinia once and for all; and the colonial budget made public on May 9 referred ominously to the same subject. Indeed, there was every indication that a crisis was impending.

Under these circumstances, Haile Selassie made his third formal appeal to the League on May 11 asking that the Council, under Article XV, see to it that Ethiopia's independence and

territorial integrity were preserved. While the Powers were now genuinely alarmed and unwilling to turn down the representations of a member for a third successive time, they were still reluctant to set in motion the League machinery for dealing with aggression. Under the leadership of Mr. Eden, a compromise was agreed upon by which Italy dropped her objection to the two Ethiopian arbiters; the Council decided on May 25 that it would meet again if a fifth arbitrator were not agreed upon; and it further set the date of August 25 for a meeting to examine the situation if a settlement had not yet taken place by that time. Thus, for the first time, the League Council formally took notice of the dispute and in effect gave the parties a time limit after which the League would definitely intervene.

On the same day that this decision was reached, Mussolini spoke to the Italian Chamber of Deputies on his foreign policy. He alleged that Ethiopia had failed to observe the Treaty of 1928, except for Article 5 which provided for arbitration and conciliation, and had since 1929 been reorganizing her army and even establishing armament factories. He represented Italy as being on the defensive and seeking peace. He then warned that too high hopes should not be entertained concerning the arbitration procedure just agreed upon. 'Let every one keep well in mind,' he said, 'that when there is a question of the security of our own territories and the lives of our soldiers we are ready to assume all, even the supreme, responsibilities.' Two weeks later he told a division of troops about to embark for East Africa, 'We have old and new accounts to settle; we will settle them.' The tone of injured innocence and the repeated notes of warning, both of which were reflected in an Italian press campaign now in full cry, boded ill for the success either of arbitration proceedings or of mediation efforts next undertaken by Great Britain.

Mr. Eden announced to the House of Commons on June 7 that the British Government was constantly attempting to bring about a 'permanent settlement mutually satisfactory to Italy and Ethiopia' and one which would take account of British, French, and Italian 'responsibilities' in the Tripartite Treaty of 1906. Even though, as he pointed out, this treaty obligated the three Powers to cooperate 'in maintaining the political and territorial integrity of Abyssinia' and was therefore quite in keeping with Article X of the League Covenant, reference to it inevitably smacked more of power politics than of League diplomacy. To be sure, if some deal could be made that would be satisfactory to the three Great

Powers and not too detrimental to Ethiopia, the Stresa Front might thereby be maintained and the risk avoided of offending Italy through League action, in which case uncomplimentary terms such as 'aggression' and 'aggressor' might be carelessly bandied about by less 'responsible' Powers. Just how Mr. Eden reconciled this course of action with his plea of May 15 for a collective system applied through the League as the only method of achieving peace and security is not clear.

With French cooperation, which was perceptibly lessened when the Anglo-German Naval Treaty was announced on June 18, Great Britain worked out a proposal whose details were discussed at Rome by Eden and Mussolini between June 24 and 26. This was the nearest approach to an Anglo-Italian conference that in any way resembled the negotiations of January between France and Italy. The British plan involved the cession by Ethiopia to Italy of a portion of Ogaden, the district within which Wal Wal was situated, in compensation for which Ethiopia was to receive an outlet to the sea at Zeila with a corridor to it through British Somaliland. In addition, Great Britain would help to promote the development of direct communications between Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. This offer was too limited to suit Mussolini, who insisted upon the necessity of providing for Italy's expanding population, although, according to newspaper reports, he declared that he did not covet all Ethiopia and would respect regions in which there were British interests. Mr. Eden, however, perhaps a little ungraciously in view of the traditions of power politics, warned Mussolini that Great Britain 'could not remain indifferent to events which might profoundly affect the League's future.'

Public opinion both in England and on the Continent condemned these British efforts to reach a settlement. The Italian press, which had been increasingly anti-British since the Council decision of May 25, insisted that Britain's efforts were solely directed toward protecting her own interests. The French press, especially after June 18, advocated that Italy be given a free hand in Ethiopia and characterized the British profession of faith in the League as hypocritical. The sanctionists in England were inclined to agree with that view. Further conciliatory remarks on the need for Italian expansion and the justice of some of Italy's charges against Ethiopia by Sir Samuel Hoare on July 11 fell on deaf ears. Moreover, Mussolini at Erboli on July 6 had already declared that Italy had 'irrevocably' decided to carry

the struggle upon which she had entered to a conclusion. An interview which appeared in the *Echo de Paris* of July 21 credited him with saying that he intended to found an empire in East Africa and that he had 'reflected, weighed, and prepared with minute care' against all risks and difficulties.

Meanwhile, in the midst of ever-continuing military preparations on both sides, in which Ethiopia was hampered by restrictions upon arms shipments imposed by a number of Governments including France in June, and Great Britain on July 25, the arbitration proceedings broke down. Therefore, in accordance with the vote of May 25 the Council of the League met on July 31 when Mussolini once more took an obdurate stand on the scope of Italo-Ethiopian arbitration which he insisted must not be extended beyond the Wal Wal incident to include the question of boundaries. Since Ethiopia yielded on this point, Baron Aloisi, Italian representative on the Council, made no objection to the appointment of a fifth arbitrator who had not heretofore been chosen, and agreed that Italy, France, and Great Britain, as co-signers of the 1906 Treaty, should meet in the near future. He refused, however, to allow Ethiopia to participate in that meeting, insisting also that it should take place outside the League. Despite Mr. Eden's reputedly hard fight to obtain Italian concessions on these points, Italy had her way. Two resolutions were accordingly passed by the Council providing for continuance of arbitration procedure and for a meeting of the Council on September 4 to examine the various aspects of the Italo-Ethiopian situation. Italy, refusing to vote on the second resolution, supported the first and took part in a meeting of the three Powers on the following day which resulted in a decision to open conversations 'at the earliest possible date.'

Friends of the League were scornful of this procedure. The League Council, declared the *Journal de Genève*, 'retreated before the obstacle, believing that it was the obstacle that was retreating. In reality it was always there and it became more formidable every day.'<sup>7</sup> According to the liberal *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, Geneva regarded the July 31 meeting of the Council as a victory for Mussolini, and doubted, as the English seemed to believe, that Mussolini had been convinced of the League's determination to fulfill its obligations in case Italy went to war. As evidence of this view, the *Guardian* pointed to Italian articles which stated that the decision of the Council permitted Italy to continue

<sup>7</sup> Paraphrased in *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, August 9, 1935, p. 110.

preparations for war, that the three-Power conversations in France would result in an Italian victory which the September 4 meeting of the Council would merely endorse, and that if such a victory was not won, Italy would not be represented at the next League meeting. At the same time, the *Guardian* estimated the French and Italian attitudes to be as follows: 'Above all, French political quarters are extremely anxious that the Abyssinian problem should be brought to a stage which will allow the great Chancelleries of Europe to think of other matters essentially more important. . . . There is no belief in well-informed Italian quarters that the dispute with Abyssinia can be settled without war.'<sup>8</sup> That lack of faith in the possibility of a peaceful settlement was also reflected in an unsigned article in the *Popolo d'Italia*, Mussolini's own paper, on July 31: 'Put in military terms, the Italo-Abyssinian problem is simple and logical. It admits — with Geneva, without Geneva, against Geneva — but one solution.'

The arbitration procedure decided upon at the July 31 meeting of the League Council was quickly consummated. Nicholas Politis of Greece having been chosen to be the fifth arbitrator, the Commission on September 3 rendered a unanimous award: As to the Wal Wal incident neither side was responsible; as to subsequent and 'minor incidents' up to May 25, 'no international responsibility need be involved.' Since even the League Council, by its second resolution of the July 31 meeting, seemed to have recognized that the Wal Wal incident no longer was of importance, but that the whole question of Italo-Ethiopian relations had to be examined, the innocuous verdict of the Commission was of little value in effecting anything beyond the termination of its services.

The Paris meeting of the three Powers, which opened on August 15 after preliminary conversations, also met a quick and inglorious end, although it had been welcomed in the Italian press as the right way to proceed in contrast to that of public debate at Geneva. Unable to obtain a precise statement of the Duce's demands from his representatives, the French and English negotiators presented to Mussolini a plan whose nature was later revealed by Mr. Eden in a report to the League Council. In essence it offered a means by which Ethiopia could carry out extensive reforms while retaining her independence and integrity. Under the aegis of the League, Great Britain, France, and Italy

<sup>8</sup> Paraphrased in *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, August 9, 1935, p. 110.

'as adjacent Powers' might assist Ethiopia in economic development and administrative reorganization in 'the most various fields of national life.' Mr. Eden explained, in words that were welcomed by Laval, that 'the collective character of the assistance' would not prevent account being taken of special Italian interests without prejudice to French and British rights; nor did the last two Powers 'exclude the possibility of territorial adjustments to which Italy and Abyssinia might agree.' It would appear that Mussolini had been offered the opportunity of a peaceful penetration of Ethiopia by Italian capital, perhaps even by colonists, without the necessity of firing a shot, but he rejected it flatly. If one may judge from an Italian Cabinet decision of August 28, Mussolini calculated that the promise, then published, to respect British interests together with the patently benevolent attitude of France would secure for him a free hand to win prestige by a little war.

Only one incident worthy of note occurred between the breakdown of the three-Power negotiations and the next meeting of the League Council. On August 30, Haile Selassie announced that he had granted a seventy-five-year concession to a British subject, F. W. Rickett, to exploit all petroleum and subsidiary products over an area which covered the eastern part of Ethiopia, the regions in which Italy was most interested. The announcement of this concession was seized upon by the Italian press as proof of its firmly held view that Great Britain was leading the opposition to Italian ambitions in Ethiopia, not out of regard for the League or its principles, but from entirely selfish motives. However, when it was discovered later that Rickett had been acting wholly in the interests of an American company, this angle of the incident was removed. The State Department at Washington promptly secured the cancellation of the contract, thus preventing a new complication over the position of an American company in a region coveted by a European Power.

Since the Three-Power Conference had failed to find an alternative to the ever-threatening outbreak of war, and the Rickett affair had further envenomed Anglo-Italian relations, the League Council on September 4 faced a grave situation. Baron Aloisi, Italian representative, made matters no better when he presented a memorandum virtually demanding that Italy be permitted to deal with Ethiopia as she saw fit, because Ethiopia was a barbarous, treacherous state that could have 'equality neither of rights nor of duties with civilized states.' Henceforth, the Wal



Wal incident was relegated to the background by the real and paramount issue: Should the League stand by Ethiopia, or should it read her out of its membership and permit Italy to go to war? Monsieur Jèze, representative of Ethiopia, after denying the indictment by Italy, summed up the situation when he asserted, 'The question is whether, in a few days, a war of extermination will be opened.'

Instead of adopting the procedure stipulated in Article XV for disputes likely to lead to a rupture, the Council made another attempt at negotiation by appointing a Committee of Five 'to make a general examination of Italo-Ethiopian relations and to seek for a pacific settlement.' Señor Madariaga of Spain was named chairman of the Committee, the other members of which were Eden for Great Britain, Laval for France, Beck of Poland, and Aras of Turkey. The first action of the Committee was to ask both disputants to refrain from taking steps that might 'disturb or endanger its work.' While Ethiopia welcomed this request, Italy was reported as flatly refusing. Moreover, her press and important speakers like Ciano, son-in-law of Mussolini and at this time Minister for Press and Propaganda, insisted that there was no question any longer of 'pacific collaboration' with Ethiopia. Furthermore, Mussolini sought to scare his principal opponents by a show of cordial friendship with Hitler when his new ambassador at Berlin on September 9 exchanged greetings with the Fuehrer which pointedly referred to Italo-German co-operation and common interests. Thus, the work of the Committee of Five was doomed before it began, for the real center of interest and the truly significant activity lay elsewhere.

Most important were the negotiations between Laval and Sir Samuel Hoare, which took place on September 10, but were not revealed until the end of December when Laval first referred to them. The French and British versions of what occurred differed slightly, but left no doubt concerning the reasons for the negotiations nor the result. Laval desired and hoped to preserve the Stresa Front; he feared that Mussolini, if pressed by the League, would align himself with Hitler. Therefore he wanted Hoare to agree upon the limit of action against Italy that the League should recommend to its members. Hoare and the British Government desired to avoid the isolation of Great Britain and hence believed in the necessity of maintaining a close accord with France. Both Laval and Hoare believed that Italian-Ethiopian hostilities were imminent. According to Laval, they found them-

selves 'instantaneously in agreement' not to attempt to apply military sanctions, naval blockade measures, nor closure of the Suez Canal against Italy. The English Government's spokesmen claimed that the two men merely agreed that at first sanctions would be limited to economic and financial measures, but that they did not bind themselves for the future. Also, it was contended that Hoare clearly indicated that Great Britain would not take isolated action. The result of this agreement was to prevent any effective collective action against Italian aggression. Yet the French and British statesmen apparently failed to reach a definite understanding that would assure the French of British aid with respect to Germany and relieve the British of their anxiety over the Italian menace to the route of Empire through the Mediterranean.<sup>9</sup> Thus, with collective action sabotaged and without either France or Britain being guaranteed against their respective enemies, the hope of checking aggression virtually disappeared.

But nothing of these backstairs politics appeared in Sir Samuel Hoare's public statement of September 11 two days after the opening of the Sixteenth Assembly of the League of Nations. Two things are noteworthy in his speech. First he proposed that, in view of the complaints by the 'have-not' Powers, a collective inquiry should be made into the fair and free distribution of raw materials from colonial and mandated areas. Coming from a spokesman for one of the richest of the 'have' Powers, this suggestion was acclaimed in liberal circles as a happy omen for the elimination, in a not too distant future, of a problem that everyone considered to be one of the principal causes for aggression on the part of such nations as Italy, Japan, and Germany. Virginio Gayda, mouthpiece of Mussolini, on the next day cynically recalled that previous conferences attempting to deal with such problems had ended in 'words, words, words.' Italy, to put it another way, was not to be deceived by fair promises.

The other and more significant point made by Sir Samuel was his insistence that his country stood with the League 'for the collective maintenance of the Covenant in its entirety, and particularly for steady and collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression.' In what amounted to an explicit commitment, he added: 'The attitude of the British nation in the last few weeks has clearly demonstrated the fact that this is no variable and unreliable sentiment, but a principle of interna-

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Werth, *Destiny of France*, pp. 177-78; and *Survey*, 1935, II, 262.

tional conduct to which they and their Government hold with firm, enduring and universal persistence. There, then, is the British attitude toward the Covenant. I cannot believe that it will be changed so long as the League remains an effective body, and the main bridge between the United Kingdom and the Continent remains intact.'

This unequivocal statement elicited a warm response from the pro-League press of England and the Continent as well as from other statesmen assembled at Geneva. Laval, well aware of the limitations upon resistance to Italy's acts of aggression to which Sir Samuel had secretly agreed, pledged his country's support of the Covenant, at the same time leaving room for the continuance of Franco-Italian collaboration in the Ethiopian question. Among the most outspoken in the debate, which continued until September 14, was Maxim Litvinov, who asserted that the only question before the Assembly was that of 'defending the Covenant of the League as the instrument of peace,' and took the opportunity to contrast the genuinely peaceful policy being pursued by the U.S.S.R. with that of other states whose bilateral non-aggression pacts failed to contribute to collective security. As later events proved, however, the Soviet Union was no more ready than Great Britain or France to take risks in an attempt to stop Italy from conquering Ethiopia.

As public sentiment and League opinion seemed to be turning definitely against Italy, whose charges, incidentally, had been ably countered by a detailed Ethiopian memorandum, Mussolini grew more obdurate. He virtually closed the door to a peaceful settlement when, after a Cabinet meeting on September 14, he issued a communiqué which asserted that the Italian Government 'feels it its duty to reconfirm in the most explicit manner that the Italo-Ethiopian problem does not admit of compromise solutions after the enormous efforts made and the sacrifices borne by the Italian people and after the irrefutable documentation contained in the Italian memorandum.' With reference to the possible application of sanctions the communiqué further stated that Italy had 'examined the case in which Italy's further adherence to the League of Nations would become impossible.' It also pointed out that Italian military preparations were being speeded 'in order to guarantee the Italian colonies from the threat of preponderant Ethiopian forces whose mobilization has already begun.'

Little wonder then that the report of the Committee of Five

on September 18, accompanied by French and British promises to aid in economic and territorial adjustments between Italy and Ethiopia, met with a flat rejection and with the contemptuous remark from Mussolini that he was being offered 'a couple of deserts — one of salt, the other of stone.' The difficulty with all League efforts, from Italy's point of view, was that they failed both to recognize the Italian thesis that Ethiopia had forfeited every claim to be treated as a member and to promise a preponderant Italian interest and position in Ethiopia. The efforts of Great Britain and France to meet the Italian desire for a free hand were scarcely acceptable either, for they were conditioned by pledges of loyalty to the Covenant. But Mussolini, to judge his views by his conduct, thought that he could safely disregard the League if he could break up the Anglo-French accord, or failing that, meet the two other parties to the 1906 Treaty on the good old Great-Power bargaining basis.

Throughout September, while the Italian press continued to vent its spleen upon Great Britain and to try to bully France into deserting her, tension mounted along the 'Route of Empire.' Although carefully explaining that their activities were not directed against each other, both Britain and Italy took naval and military precautions. Britain raised her garrisons at Malta and Aden to normal strength for the first time since the World War and strengthened her forces at Gibraltar. During the first half of September the British fleet at Malta steamed off to Alexandria, apparently to escape Italian air bombing, and was subsequently reinforced by units from the home fleet and from Chinese waters. Italy countered by increasing her forces in Libya. Mussolini, perhaps a little worried by British moves, offered a typical appeasement plea through an interview published in the London *Morning Post* on September 17. Let Italy have colonies, he argued, and she would become 'conservative, like all colonial Powers'; but without them she would remain of necessity 'a point of agitation.' A little later, on September 28, an Italian communiqué issued after a Cabinet meeting declared that Italy had no immediate or concealed aims that could damage the interests of Great Britain. Furthermore, in his proclamation of October 2 on the day of Italy's 'national mobilization,' Mussolini professed himself incapable of believing that the British people would risk 'pushing Europe into the path of catastrophe' in order to defend an African country recognized to be 'without a shadow of civilization.' Yet, despite all these fair words, the

facts remained that the British people were aroused against what they considered to be Italian aggression, and the Government, whether because of a determination to protect British interests, or from recognition of its responsibilities with respect to collective action, was cautiously gathering the forces of Empire about the strategic points on Italy's path to East Africa. Thus, by the beginning of October 1935, a British-Italian rivalry had emerged which not only confused and complicated the issues in the ensuing months, but remained a constant menace to peace in the following years.

#### *4. War and Sanctions*

Whether Mussolini minimized the risks he might run or had gone so far that he could not turn back, he at length announced to the League Council on October 3, 1935, that Ethiopian aggressiveness and warlike spirit had 'succeeded in imposing war on Italy,' and that Italy had taken 'the necessary measures of defense.' Almost immediately came reports of fighting, and within two weeks Italy had won important victories in northern Ethiopia.

Faced with this situation, the Council on October 7 adopted a report of its Committee of Thirteen which was composed of all its members except Italy. Analyzing the history of the Italo-Ethiopian dispute, this report admitted the need of Ethiopian reforms, but called attention to Italy's warlike and Ethiopia's peaceful attitude during the course of the quarrel. On the same day the Council also received a statement issued by a Committee of Six which had been appointed on October 5 to investigate whether or not war actually was being waged. This Committee had come to the conclusion that Italy had 'resorted to war in disregard of its covenants under Article 12 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.' Thus, for the first time, a European Great Power had in effect been declared an aggressor.

When the report of the Council was laid before the League Assembly, convened on October 9, only three states — Austria, Hungary, and Albania — refused to approve the resolution declaring that Italy had violated her obligations under the Covenant. The Assembly then set up a Coordinating Committee, at first of seventeen but later of eighteen members, and several sub-committees to consider and report upon measures to be taken against Italy. These were formulated and announced at inter-

vals up to November 18 when all sanctions were to come into force completely. By December 12, fifty-three nations had pledged an arms embargo directed against Italy; fifty-two, a credit boycott; fifty, a prohibition of imports from Italy; fifty-one, an embargo on certain exports to Italy; and forty-six had accepted the draft of a plan designed to aid those upon whom the stoppage of trade with Italy might work a hardship. Only four states — Albania, Austria, Hungary, and Paraguay — had refused to take any action under Article XVI of the Covenant.

On paper this was an impressive showing, but the actuality was less reassuring for those who hoped that sanctions would stop the war. In the first place, economic relations with Italy were not completely broken off, and many states which had promised to apply the measures recommended by the Coordinating Committee had to wait upon a dilatory legislative machinery in order to put their resolutions into effect. Moreover, the exemption of iron, steel, cotton, wool, copper, lead, zinc, and oil from the list of commodities under embargo made a serious gap in the sanctions system. The excuse offered for excepting this list of key war materials was that League members did not control their supply. This allusion to such non-member nations as Germany and the United States fell short of a reasonable explanation. While neither of these larger Powers adopted the League sanctions, Germany declared that she would not increase her trade with Italy above normal, would not sell arms to either side, and would avoid doing anything that might disturb international relations. The United States, through its neutrality legislation and through pressure upon business firms, prohibited the export of arms and attempted to reduce shipments of other commodities. The attitude of Secretary Hull and President Roosevelt was openly sympathetic toward the efforts of the League to stop aggression and might well have resulted in even further measures had not American opinion been outraged in December at the Hoare-Laval plan to end the war by an imperialistic deal that would satisfy rather than punish the aggressor.

The reasons for this attempt to placate Mussolini lay not only in the British desire to avoid the risk of war at almost any cost, but also in the French fear of Germany. Throughout the Ethiopian crisis the German Government's attitude had been unexpectedly correct, although war materials were covertly shipped to Italy and there were rumors of an Italo-German rapprochement. From a realistic viewpoint, Hitler had no reason to take

either side openly, for Italy had yet to prove herself a strong Power and therefore a desirable ally, but if Hitler lined up against her he might help to forge collective security links as undesirable for Germany as for any other ambitious nation. Likewise Hitler had no interest in settling the dispute over the Franco-Soviet Pact and in solving the question of non-aggression and air pacts until he saw which way the Ethiopian affair was going to turn out. It was his refusal even to discuss these matters that disturbed the British and alarmed Laval.

Laval's attitude, however, was determined by the internal situation in France and the policy of Great Britain as well as by his concern over Hitler's policy. At home the Right, emboldened by Laval's leniency, and the Left, fearful of Fascistic attacks upon democratic institutions, were once more at swords' points in the autumn of 1935. Their differences over foreign affairs were less marked than those over internal matters, for although the Right remained pro-Italian, such leading figures of the Left as Léon Blum did not want any sanctions that might bring war. An agreement on December 6 to disarm all semi-military organizations in France made Laval's position somewhat easier. Yet he had failed to obtain from Britain any explicit pledge of military aid against Germany in return for French promises to help England in case of conflict with Italy.

These circumstances undoubtedly helped to fortify Laval's own impulse to try appeasement of Germany in November. Just what was discussed between Laval's personal friend and adviser Fernand de Brinon and Hitler in the middle of that month has not been revealed, but according to some reports Laval was ready to give Hitler a free hand in Eastern Europe. It is well known that Laval informed the Fuehrer that he would soon have to place the Franco-Soviet Pact before Parliament for ratification, but whether he intended to convey this information as a threat or as a hint that if Germany acted upon his overture the pact might never be ratified is not clear. His appeasement efforts, however, came to nought because Hitler gave him the same answer as he had given the British concerning a Western air pact, that Germany could do nothing pending the settlement of the Ethiopian question. Laval was thus unsuccessful in eliminating the possibility of a German menace should France become involved in a quarrel with Italy.

At the same time the probability of such a quarrel was increased by the demand of some League members for an embargo

on oil shipments to Italy. On November 6, the League Committee of Eighteen adopted a Canadian proposal to adopt an embargo on key war materials thus far excepted, as soon as conditions for effective control were realized. By the twenty-seventh several nations, including the oil-producing countries of Rumania, Iraq, and the U.S.S.R., had declared themselves in favor of the proposal. But Laval, who in a broadcast the same night appealed to Mussolini to make peace on terms recognizing both the Covenant and Italian interests, secured the postponement of the meeting to discuss oil sanctions from November 29 to December 12. On November 30, following an announcement of precautionary military measures, Italy notified the members of the Committee of Eighteen that the extension of sanctions to include oil would be regarded as an unfriendly act. As Laval admitted in his radio talk of November 27, his rôle was 'difficult.' 'I must,' he said, 'maintain intact our friendly cooperation with Great Britain, emphasize the fidelity of France to the Covenant of the League of Nations, while safeguarding the ties of friendship with Italy which I have myself sealed at Rome the 7th of January last.' Thus, Laval had every reason to attempt ending the Italo-Ethiopian war at once and no reason, from his viewpoint, for being squeamish over the means as long as there was hope of regaining Italy's alliance against Germany.

Members of the British Government, too, wanted to end the war, although for slightly different reasons. Satisfied with German promises that the Reich would cause no trouble pending a solution of the Ethiopian crisis, they were principally concerned over the possibility of a conflict with Italy. Shocked to discover that Mussolini had not been bluffing in his belligerent attitude toward Ethiopia, they tended to take his threatening talk about sanctions too seriously. More shocked to realize suddenly that Mussolini's airplanes and mosquito fleet could deal the royal navy a serious blow, they overestimated his fighting forces, although the Duce himself, according to Marshal de Bono, had genuine misgivings concerning his ability to withstand a conflict with Great Britain. Furthermore, such men as Hoare and Baldwin were inclined to take the traditional attitude that it was better to bargain than to permit an opponent to have his own way after a decisive victory, and they had no doubt that Mussolini would ultimately win the war if he was allowed to carry it on. Finally, Great Britain was in an anomalous position, for while she had been leading the League in the adoption of sanctions, she had



taken naval and military precautions on her own account and was therefore afraid that she might be left to bear the brunt of Italian action in case of conflict. Her connection with France was as much a hindrance as a help, for although Laval had promised, after long negotiations lasting from September 10 to October 25, to aid Great Britain in case of an Italian attack, he had stipulated in effect that the British Government must obtain his previous consent before advocating any extension of League sanctions. All things considered, including the fact that the general elections of November had returned such a huge majority behind the Government that it felt safe in running the risk of disregarding pro-League sentiment, the best solution to the crisis seemed to the British to be a deal by which Mussolini could be bought off from pursuing the war.

In all fairness to Sir Samuel Hoare and to Laval, whose serious consideration of a peace plan began toward the end of November, the League Coordinating Committee on November 2 had taken note of a suggestion of the Belgian Prime Minister that Great Britain and France continue efforts at conciliation. While this did not constitute the 'moral mandate' alleged in some quarters, it did amount to encouragement, as Laval himself admitted. Laval, who had never ceased his efforts to placate Mussolini and had probably kept in touch with him to learn what sanctions he would tolerate, was obviously the prime mover in working out a peace plan, the technical data for which were supplied by British and French experts who began their joint study as early as November 21. On the other hand, both Baldwin and Hoare were willing collaborators and had also been in touch with Mussolini. Their views were expressed by Hoare in a speech in the House of Commons on December 5 when he not only referred again to his September 11 suggestion that something be done about raw materials, but also declared that the British Government was 'most anxious to see a strong Italy in the world, an Italy that is strong, morally, physically, and socially. . . .' How much encouragement Mussolini gave British Ambassador Drummond and the Italian Ambassador gave Laval in talks between November 18 and December 4 is not known, but Mussolini himself in a speech to the Italian Chamber of Deputies on December 6, after much of the experts' proposals had become known through newspaper reports, took a somewhat milder tone than had been generally expected, although he issued a warning in regard to oil sanctions and concluded that the

only way in which the crisis could be ended was to recognize fully Italian rights and safeguard completely her interests in Africa.

This is very nearly what Sir Samuel and Laval did do when they met at Paris on December 7 and 8. If Sir Samuel had any qualms about what he was doing, they were undoubtedly overcome by Laval's information that, if oil sanctions were voted on December 12, Mussolini would attack the British fleet, in which case it would take France at least eighteen days before she could come to Britain's aid. Certainly, the terms of the peace proposal were completed in a remarkably short time. The negotiators had intended to keep the details secret until the plan had been submitted to Prime Minister Baldwin and to the belligerents, but their calculations were upset by publication in the French press on December 9 of full accounts of the plan. Although these accounts were declared to be inaccurate, they turned out to be correct enough and indicated clearly that Italy was to take full possession of almost every bit of the rather extensive territory occupied to date, while Haile Selassie was to receive a meager corridor to the Red Sea through Eritrea. This was called an 'exchange of territory.' Furthermore, France and Great Britain were to attempt an arrangement by which Italy would secure a huge zone for economic expansion in southern Ethiopia. To be sure, a sop was thrown to idealists in providing for some League supervision over the area which constituted the major portion of Ethiopia.

Public opinion in England was once more aroused to fever pitch. The Government in its own defense cut a rather sorry figure, claiming that Sir Samuel's agreement with Laval had not been known or approved before the surprise publication brought the plan before the public. In the end, Sir Samuel, who defended himself on the ground that he was primarily trying to prevent the spreading of the war and to avert disaster, resigned his office and was replaced on December 22 by Anthony Eden. The French reaction at first was not nearly as violent as the English. The Right was rather pleased at the about-face of the Covenant's British defender. The Left, however, gathering courage from the uproar in London, denounced the plan as a premium on aggression. Everyone expected Laval to be defeated in the Chamber of Deputies and yet, though no one trusted him, his eloquent speech of December 28, justifying his policy and pledging his unswerving devotion to the League and

its principles, won him a vote of confidence and continuance in office until January 22. Meanwhile, the Hoare-Laval plan had been forwarded to Haile Selassie and Mussolini on December 11. The League Committee of Eighteen on December 12 decided not to consider oil sanctions until the plan had been examined by the various interested parties. On December 19, after Ethiopia had formally protested against the plan, after Mussolini had indicated his rejection, and after Laval and Eden out of deference to public opinion had discussed it with faint praise, the League perfunctorily buried the project with a polite vote of thanks to France and Great Britain for their efforts on behalf of peace.

Although the plan had not ended the war, it had served a useful purpose for Laval, because it had enabled him to get the question of oil sanctions shelved, thus sparing him the painful choice between Italy and effective sanctions. On the other hand, despite Laval's revelation that the French admiralty, army, and air staffs had been conferring with the British since December 9, his vacillation between the League and the dictators had done France irreparable harm. France's allies among the small nations began to distrust her steadfastness to the principle of collective security, while Great Britain was regarded as the chief supporter of the League.

Eden's policy went far to wipe out the memory of Hoare's part in the attempt to appease Mussolini. The day before he came into office it was announced that Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia, Rumania, and Czechoslovakia had agreed to give Britain naval and military aid in case of an attack by Italy. Armed with formal confirmation of these pledges on January 22, 1936, Eden pressed for the application of oil sanctions. Although action was delayed by the death of King George V on January 20 and by the change in France from Laval's Government to Sarraut's stop-gap Cabinet of January 24, the League's Committee of Eighteen offered evidence in support of it by reporting on February 12 that if the United States would limit her oil exports to Italy to the 1934 level, oil sanctions could be expected to end the war in three or three and a half months. At length the time seemed ripe for action on March 2 when Eden announced that Britain was prepared to support oil sanctions. Italian victories had saved Italy's prestige; France seemed willing to support England; and risks of reprisals seemed small, though Mussolini continued his threatening tone. On March 5, Haile Selassie as-

sented to League proposals for peace negotiations which had been presented as a final means of ending the war before oil sanctions were applied. On March 7, Mussolini agreed in principle to negotiate. On the same day, however, Hitler denounced the Locarno Pacts and sent his army marching into the Rhineland, thus shoving the Ethiopian war into the background.

In some quarters it was expected that Haile Selassie's forces could hold out until the rainy season set in. If that proved to be the case, the issue between him and Mussolini could be taken up again. However, the inconstancy of the Ethiopian feudal chieftains and the potency of modern mechanized armies and of poison gas sprayed from the air spelled disaster for the *Negus*. Under the direction of Marshal Badoglio the Fascist army and air force unleashed their full fury in the early spring. The Italians not only took Dessie, Haile Selassie's former headquarters north of Addis Ababa, on April 15, but by the end of the month were within seventy-five miles of the capital. After that the crumbling of Ethiopian resistance went on apace. On May 2, the 'Lion of Judah' renounced direction of affairs and two days later left for Jerusalem on a British warship. Finally, Graziani on May 9 broke through on the southern front, where operations had been a little slower, to make contact with Badoglio's forces which had entered Addis Ababa two days earlier. This meant the end of the war, although Italy still had before her the difficult task of bringing the country entirely under subjection.

The League throughout March and April had been too deeply concerned over Germany's Rhineland coup to pay much attention to the question of economic and military sanctions. When on May 9 Mussolini's Government issued a decree placing the 'Empire of Ethiopia' under Italian jurisdiction, the League was faced with the most humiliating failure of its history. Since no one seemed quite ready to say what should now be done, the League Council, at its May meeting, postponed action in order, as one observer phrased it, 'that the British Government should have time to find a policy.'<sup>10</sup>

During the next few weeks both Mussolini and the British Government gave proof of a desire for rapprochement. The Duce told a French journalist that he was ready to give England all possible assurances. On June 5, Sir Samuel Hoare returned to the British Cabinet as head of the Admiralty and on June 10, Chancellor of the Exchequer Neville Chamberlain not only

<sup>10</sup> *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, June 12, 1936, p. 462.

regretted the 'grievous estrangement' between Italy and England, but even declared that it would be 'midsummer madness' to continue sanctions. At last, on June 18, after such unmistakable straws in the wind Eden announced to a tense House of Commons that Great Britain would recommend the end of sanctions. Maintaining that further pressure upon Italy would only lead to war, he did not even hint at non-recognition of Italy's conquests. Perhaps in an effort to win some approval from a jeering Opposition which felt that Great Britain and the League were capitulating to Italy, Eden asserted that the mutual-assistance pledges exchanged with Mediterranean countries would remain in force, at least for the time being, and that Great Britain's position in the Mediterranean would be strengthened. As for the League, the Government was determined that it should continue to function, but that it should be reorganized to take 'into account the lessons of the last few months.' The British Government's decision to put an end to sanctions was tantamount to League adoption of that policy, since there was no other Great Power which could assume leadership against the aggressor.

The final chapter of the League's first and last attempt to deal with an aggressor under Article XVI was written in Geneva between June 30 and July 6. Three dramatic and symbolical incidents marked the meeting which voted the end of sanctions against Italy. When Haile Selassie on June 30 rose to make one more plea for his country before the world's most august Assembly, he was greeted by a chorus of hisses from a group of Italian journalists who had to be removed from the gallery. On July 3, a Jewish correspondent from Czechoslovakia sought to make a striking protest against the ways of the League and the fate of his Jewish brethren in Germany and elsewhere by committing suicide in the Assembly gallery. Finally, on July 4, as the League was voting away the last hope of Ethiopian independence, the National Socialist President of the Danzig Senate addressed the League Council with 'the most insolent speech ever made in that august presence — which, after a mild rebuke, was substantially repeated without provoking further action.'<sup>11</sup>

Even though sanctions ended on July 15 and the League had refused a loan to finance further Ethiopian resistance, the Assembly at its regular meeting in September granted temporary recognition to an Ethiopian delegation on the ground that an

<sup>11</sup> *New York Times*, July 5, 1936, Sect. I, p. 12.

Ethiopian Government still existed in the unsubdued portion of the country. This recognition, however, was granted in spite of British and French plans to withhold it and constituted almost the only evidence throughout the whole sorry Ethiopian mess of any independence on the part of League members from the leading-strings of the Great Powers.

The contrast between the high hopes of October 1935 and the lugubrious atmosphere in Geneva when sanctions were ended was a measure of the distance Europe had traversed from collective security to a free-for-all struggle between the 'have' and 'have-not' Powers. The fault did not lie with the machinery of the League, but with those who ran it. Fear of Germany, fear of what might happen to Italy should Mussolini suffer the disgrace of defeat, and fear of Italian reprisals had palsied the hands of those who directed the League's policy. France and Great Britain were not the only culprits in this respect, for there was no member of the League — not excepting Soviet Russia, whose devotion to League principles was so eloquently set forth by Litvinov in September 1935 and by Molotov on January 11, 1936 — that was prepared to take the risk of war either for Ethiopia or for the Covenant. In fairness to the League it must be admitted that it was even less a world institution in 1935 than it had been only five years before. Not only was the United States with its great power and wealth not a member, but also both Germany and Japan had withdrawn their membership. Such a situation had always been regarded as a most serious one, because the League's machinery for war prevention had been designed on the assumption that at least all Great Powers would support it.

### *5. The Cost of War and Sanctions*

In reckoning the cost of sanctions, feeble and ineffective as they had been, it became clear that they had affected adversely the economic life of both Italy and the sanctionist Powers. The export and import businesses, of course, were hardest hit. Italy lost some \$30,000,000 in exports between December 1935 and March 1936; her growing shipbuilding industry suffered a setback; and, although food was not on the sanctions list, Italy tried to maintain self-sufficiency in order to preserve her gold supply. Meatless days were decreed and other foods were limited, though staple food prices were kept low by closing shops

which ignored the official price list. Besides making these sacrifices, Italy had spent about twelve billion lire on the conquest of Ethiopia up to the end of June 1936, thus heavily taxing her resources and mortgaging the future. Early estimates placed the cost of the Ethiopian war to Europe, excluding Italy, at more than \$600,000 a day. Great Britain and France calculated that they had lost about \$20,000,000 each in trade. Even harder hit by the sanctions policy were the smaller states of Southeastern Europe whose trade with Italy represented a much higher proportion of their total than was the case with the Western Powers.<sup>12</sup>

If these material losses had been the only ones suffered by the sanctionist states the balance sheet would not have looked so bad despite their failure to achieve their objective. But the shilly-shallying throughout the crisis, especially by France and to a lesser extent by Great Britain, not only furthered the distrust of their policy that had been growing among the smaller states, but also supplied another object-lesson to the dictators on methods of obtaining what they wanted from the democracies. For example, Sir Samuel Hoare's insistence that the Hoare-Laval peace plan had been put forward because of the danger of war with Italy clearly proved that if a determined dictator howled loudly enough about going to war and about being prepared to do it, Great Britain and France would scuttle to cover. This lesson was not lost on Hitler who, indeed, had already demonstrated how easy it was to confound and dismay his opponents. In fact, he was quite as responsible as anyone for the spineless handling of Mussolini. At the proper time, he stepped in to complete the discomfiture of his pusillanimous opponents when he remilitarized the Rhineland and denounced the Locarno Pacts in March 1936.

<sup>12</sup> See *Current History*, January 1937, p. 17.

## CHAPTER SIX

### GERMAN VICTORIES: THE RHINELAND COUP AND AUSTRIA, 1936

WHILE the European countries were occupied with the question of the application of oil sanctions against Italy in the early spring of 1936, Germany shocked the world with its third 'Saturday Surprise.' The two other surprises had been the withdrawal from the League on October 14, 1933, and the announcement of the reintroduction of conscription in the Reich on March 16, 1935. The third and greatest shock was delivered almost exactly one year later when, on March 7, 1936, German troops re-occupied the Rhineland in open violation of the Pact of Locarno and the Treaty of Versailles.

#### *1. Hitler and the Franco-Soviet Pact*

It is apparent now, though it was not at the time, that Hitler began preparations for his Rhineland coup soon after November 27, 1935, when the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French Chamber of Deputies voted to recommend the ratification of the mutual-assistance treaty with Soviet Russia which had been signed the preceding May. The British Government received the first inklings of Hitler's intentions when on December 13, 1935, its Ambassador sought once more to open conversations with the Fuehrer on the basis of his own assurances announced on May 21 that he would, among other things, conclude bilateral pacts of non-aggression and negotiate an air pact with the Western Powers. Hitler, according to the British Ambassador's report, objected to the conclusion of any bilateral arrangements and declared that 'the Franco-Soviet "military alliance" directed against Germany had rendered any air pact out of the question, for the bringing into the picture of Russia had completely upset the balance of power in Europe.' He further explained that when he had been asked about the conclusion of an Eastern Pact at the time of the Stresa Conference, he had not realized 'the full meaning of the Franco-Soviet Alliance' to which he



now objected primarily because it permitted each party to decide who the eventual aggressor might be. This situation, he stated, 'even impaired the efficacy and value of the Treaty of Locarno.'<sup>1</sup>

The serious implications of such a statement could scarcely be allowed to pass unnoticed, though the fall of Sir Samuel Hoare, the preoccupation with the Naval Conference, the Ethiopian crisis, and imperial troubles in the Near and Far East prevented an immediate reply. Thus, on January 8, 1936, Eden took up the discussion by asserting his desire for 'a close and confidential understanding between Great Britain, France, and Germany,' while at the same time pointing out that the German Government had never before December 13 claimed that the Franco-Russian Treaty rendered an 'air pact out of the question,' and that it had even submitted a draft of one after the treaty had been signed. Evidently Hitler had been a little too outspoken, for von Neurath met this criticism with a slight retraction. He explained to the British Ambassador that what the Fuehrer had meant to say was that the Franco-Soviet Pact now prevented an 'air *limitation* agreement,' not an 'air pact.' In any case, von Neurath added, conversations must include Italy as well as the other four Locarno Powers which, of course, was out of the question until the Ethiopian crisis was resolved. Less reassuring, though, was the charge in government-controlled German newspapers that the Franco-British naval military and air staff talks, begun over the Mediterranean situation in October 1935, included discussions concerning British cooperation with France in case of hostilities with Germany. The Germans contended that such negotiations were incompatible with the spirit and letter of the Locarno Treaty.

Still, any fears which may have arisen in Eden's mind as a result of these repeated German references to the annulment by others of the Locarno Pact must have been put at rest during his talk on January 27 with von Neurath, who had come to London to attend the funeral of King George V. Emphasizing the absence of any differences which could cause trouble between Germany and Great Britain, as well as between Germany and France, Neurath declared, according to Eden's own report of the conversation, that the 'German Government fully intended

<sup>1</sup> This and subsequent British exchanges are contained in Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Cmd. 5143, *Correspondence Showing the Course of Certain Diplomatic Discussions Directed Toward Securing an European Settlement, June 1934 to March 1936* (London, 1936), p. 61 ff.

to respect the Treaty of Locarno. All that they asked was that others should observe it in the spirit as well as in the letter.' Furthermore, while von Neurath admitted that the Franco-Soviet Treaty along with the Soviet-Czechoslovak Pact 'would render the negotiation of an air pact and an air limitation pact more difficult,' he 'emphasized that he did not say impossible.' Throughout the month of February, moreover, the German Government and press stressed the desire for good relations with England. On the other hand, Eden, though publicly and privately asserting that Great Britain would stand by her obligations under the Locarno Pact, also declared both in public and to the German Ambassador that England would not have any part in the encirclement of Germany. Fully aware of recent German opinion, he probably expected that the Reich might make formal representations concerning her view of the Franco-Soviet Pact after its final ratification, but certainly did not anticipate any such brusque repudiation of the Locarno Treaty as occurred on March 7.

Meanwhile, neither Belgium nor France was quite so complacent as Great Britain even though they also failed to foresee Hitler's drastic action. Van Zeeland, Belgian Prime Minister, was reported as urging France to meet Hitler halfway by offering him the remilitarization of the Rhineland in return for an agreement limiting air armament. Whatever the truth of this rumor, van Zeeland on March 6 did conclude with France a renewal with modification of the 1920 agreement providing for the co-operation of their military staffs in planning to meet a German aggression against either Belgium or France.

The French Government, after January 24, when Sarraut succeeded Laval, was in the unfortunate position of being a stop-gap until the election in late April of a new Chamber of Deputies which would undoubtedly be more representative of popular feeling than the existing one chosen in 1932 under entirely different circumstances. Nevertheless, Sarraut and his Foreign Minister Flandin had to plunge into a maze of discussions when, as an aftermath of the gathering in London for George V's funeral, Monarchs, Premiers, Foreign Ministers, and notables from all Europe visited Paris in February. Although Austrian independence as well as schemes for some kind of Danubian pact claimed much attention, the problem of a Soviet-Rumanian pact to bridge the gap between Russia and Czechoslovakia, which were separated by the Rumanian-held Bukovina, was

likewise considered. Negotiations during the previous summer for a Soviet-Rumanian mutual-assistance pact had been stopped by King Carol's opposition, but now France, though she failed to bring about a pact, nevertheless contributed to the development of the Franco-Soviet security policy by promising to supply Rumania with about forty-five million dollars' worth of armaments. With this brightening of the prospects of obstructing German economic and political expansion into Central and Eastern Europe in the background, the French Chamber began discussing the Franco-Soviet Pact on February 11.

The *Rapporteur* of the Foreign Affairs Committee not only declared before the Chamber that the pact with Russia was compatible with the Locarno Treaty, but pointed out that it was less 'automatic' than the Franco-Czech and Franco-Polish agreements which formed part of the Locarno security structure and had never been the object of German resentment. In answer to the German contention that under the terms of the Franco-Soviet Pact either of the two Powers could alone decide who was an aggressor, the *Rapporteur* contended that France would have to consult the other Locarno Powers before taking action against Germany in order to avoid the risk of being accused by them of violating the Locarno Treaty. Finally, pointing out that Germany had been invited to join the Franco-Russian Treaty, he asked why, if Germany had no intention of being an aggressor, she did not do so.

Although the French Right-Wing parties had been in favor of the pact with Russia when it was signed, they now attacked it on various grounds, some of which reflected the line of argument being used against it in the German press. The U.S.S.R. was not to be trusted, they asserted; her army was weak and too far away to be of value. Most stressed was the point that the pact was dangerous because it would virtually legitimize the Communist Party and open France to the ravages of the Comintern — a favorite German warning. One deputy, Taittinger, reflected another body of opinion when he not only frankly declared that he preferred friendship with Germany to cooperation with the Soviet, but also implied that Germany might better be given a free hand in the East.

While the Socialists seemed only mildly in favor of ratification, the Communists and the Radical Socialists, who were a majority in the Sarraut Government, ardently supported it. They countered Rightist objections by extolling the strength and equip-

ment of the Red Army and the loyalty of the Soviet to collective security. Herriot pointed out that since France could not turn her back on Eastern Europe because of her treaty obligations to Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Rumania, she needed Russia's help to fulfill them. Foreign Minister Flandin denied that France was trying to isolate Germany and offered to settle the question of compatibility between the Soviet and the Locarno Pacts by submitting it to the World Court. At the same time he called for renewed Franco-German friendship and rebuked those who were attributing to Germany the intention of repudiating Locarno. Thus, after a leisurely debate, and with the hope that France could have both the Soviet Treaty and peaceful relations with Germany, the Chamber at last voted for ratification of the pact on February 27.

The next day, the hopes of German friendship seemed confirmed in an interview with Hitler, secured by Bertrand de Jouvenel for the *Paris-Midi*. Therein, the Fuehrer, in the friendliest manner, called for a reconciliation between France and Germany, although he also warned that the ratification of the Franco-Soviet Pact would 'naturally create a new situation.' Even the French Leftist press, which was critical of many points in the interview, was almost unanimous in advising that France should try to talk things over with Germany and find out what she wanted. The French Government then hastened to inquire through its Ambassador in Berlin if Hitler had any concrete proposals to make, but received the reply on March 2 that his interview had taken place before the Chamber's vote for ratification of the Soviet Pact, which had now changed the whole situation, and in view of that fact, Hitler required time in order to prepare proposals which he promised to make. Hitler, moreover, begged the Ambassador to keep the interview a secret, an inexplicable request until it became clear on March 7 that had the world known of the French desire to negotiate, Hitler's excuse for his coup, that France was to blame for violating the Locarno Treaties, would have appeared less plausible.

## *2. The Rhineland Coup and the End of Locarno*

Although Hitler decided upon his general policy at a meeting with leading Nazis and high ranking army men on March 2, the events of the next few days undoubtedly determined the timing of his action. On March 3, the French Government submitted

the Soviet Pact to the Senate, thus indicating its determination to complete the ratification of the treaty, while the British Government presented to Parliament a program for a greater increase in armaments than was contemplated the year before. At the same time, the Italo-Ethiopian conflict reached a new crisis. On March 2, at Geneva, Eden had strongly urged an early application of oil sanctions against Italy, which had thrown the French into a panic. Here was the right moment for Germany to strike. Whether or not Hitler was prompted by Mussolini to divert the attention of Europe from Ethiopia to the Rhineland is still an open question. Mussolini had been in close touch with Germany, but had assured the French Ambassador on February 27 that the only results of his recently increased contacts with Berlin were a clarification of interests and an improved atmosphere. Furthermore, his behavior after March 7 seemed to confirm this statement. On the other hand, when the League on March 3 gave Italy and Ethiopia one week in which to open peace negotiations, rumors spread that Italy would leave the League, would repudiate the agreement with France of January 7, 1935, and together with Germany would abrogate the Locarno Pacts. Also, what part the German fear of a Franco-British agreement on military cooperation may have played is a matter of doubt. Everyone knew that the French wanted a British pledge of assistance in case of a German breach of Locarno in return for French consent to the application of strong measures against Italy. Perhaps the timing of Hitler's repudiation of Locarno was determined by the desire to act before such a bargain could be struck.

Certainly under the circumstances — the Ethiopian crisis, divided counsels among the leading Great Powers, and the inability of the League up to that time to check Italy effectively — Germany had little to fear in the way of sanctions. Yet Hitler was reported to have found stubborn resistance among his more conservative advisers, especially the army officers, to his proposal that Germany abrogate Articles 42 and 43 of the Versailles Treaty by remilitarizing the Rhineland and at the same time denounce the Locarno Treaty — that freely negotiated pact which he had categorically promised only nine months before to respect. It is said that the opposition of army generals, based upon the belief that the German forces were not yet prepared to take the risk of a clash with France, was only overcome by Hitler's solemn pledge to withdraw the German troops if France

ordered mobilization. However that may be, the stage was set for the 'Saturday Surprise' by Friday, March 6, when Eden was informed, during an interview with the German Ambassador in which the British Foreign Minister made another appeal for action on the long-promised air pact, that he would receive a definite proposal on the morrow.

At eleven o'clock, March 7, while German troops, moving into the demilitarized zone, rumbled across the Rhine bridges toward the Belgian and French frontier, Hitler mounted the rostrum of the Reichstag to justify his course of action and to announce a plebiscite on March 29 when the German people would have a chance to approve or reject his policies. Hitler's speech displayed the usual blend of good common sense, adroit interpretation of recent history, insistence upon peace, and castigation of Bolshevism that was well calculated to win not only the support of the German people, but also the approbation of both conservative and fairminded groups outside. He explained that Germany was merely seeking that equality and security which would enable her to live happily in the European family where one nation's misery could not fail to make all miserable. That the German people were innately peaceful was proved by the fact that they had gained for themselves only a modest share of 'living space' and of the world's goods. Despite his picture of overcrowded Germany, Hitler declared: 'We have no territorial demands to make in Europe.' That Hitler had been compelled to break the Versailles Treaty in his efforts to achieve German equality was no fault of his, but of the victor nations who had framed it in such a way as to enslave Germany. In an attempt to assure Europe of his good faith, Hitler asserted that he was now 'more than ever conscious of the necessity of honoring the obligations which our regained national honor and freedom impose upon us.'

Furthermore, he was ready for 'a real, honest, and equal European cooperation,' although with regard to the Soviet Union he explained that he refused cooperation, 'not with Russia [*sic!*] but with Bolshevism, which has claimed the mastery of the world.' Then, after suggesting that Europe was becoming divided between that half composed of 'independent, self-sustaining national states' to which Germany belonged and the other half 'governed by that intolerant Bolshevik doctrine which . . . to us, appears horrible,' he pictured the tragedy of the existing situation as lying in the fact that, despite his own

efforts throughout three years to win the 'confidence, sympathy, and affection of the French people,' they had made a 'military alliance' with Bolshevik Russia. Thus they had 'led into the middle of Europe, via [the] detour of Czechoslovakia, . . . the threatening military power of [a] gigantic Empire.' Moreover, Germany did not object to French pacts with Poland and Czechoslovakia because those nations followed policies of national interest, whereas Russia confessed a 'creed, . . . in favor of world revolution.' Since this creed might also triumph in France 'tomorrow or the day after tomorrow,' the alliance would be directed from Moscow alone. Thus, though Hitler did not explicitly say so, he plainly indicated that the real danger for Germany lay in her eventual encirclement by the Comintern. Finally, Hitler explained that, as 'the spirit of the Locarno Pact' had been thus contravened by the French, he 'after a hard struggle' with himself — apparently to overcome his repugnance at breaking treaties — had been compelled to abrogate it and propose new arrangements.

Hitler's formal statement of his views and proposals was contained in the memorandum which was delivered to the Locarno Powers while he was speaking. Contending on the already familiar but nonetheless controvertible legal ground that France had herself broken the Locarno Agreement by making the mutual-assistance treaty with Soviet Russia, and that therefore Germany was no longer bound by the 'now defunct pact,' this document then stated that the Reich was reasserting its full sovereignty over the Rhineland 'in the interest of the primitive right of a nation to secure her own borders and to safeguard her possibilities of defense.' But to make clear Germany's peaceful and essentially defensive aims, the Government was offering the following seven proposals: (1) The German Government was ready to negotiate with Belgium and France for the creation of a demilitarized zone on both sides of the frontier. In view of the millions of francs expended on the Maginot line, Hitler well knew that there was no danger of French acquiescence in such a scheme. (2) Likewise, the Reich was proffering a twenty-five-year non-aggression pact between Germany, France, and Belgium. (3) Germany also was willing to invite England and Italy to act as guarantor Powers, and (4) would be agreeable to the inclusion of the Netherlands in this pact system. Except for the inclusion of the Netherlands, there was essentially no difference between these proposals and the previous Locarno Pact,

but the situation had been radically changed by the presence of German troops on the Belgian and French frontiers. (5) The German Government was ready 'to conclude between the Western Powers an air pact, designed automatically and effectively to forestall the danger of a sudden air attack.' This added nothing to previous declarations. (6) Berlin was repeating her offer to negotiate non-aggression treaties with states 'bordering on the east of Germany.' This was explained to mean that Lithuania was now included in the proposal provided the autonomy of Memel was effectively carried out. Furthermore, in a subsequent interview Hitler also explicitly included Austria and Czechoslovakia in this offer. (7) In conclusion, and because 'Germany's equality at last' was 'finally achieved and full sovereignty over the whole Reich territory' was 'reestablished,' she was prepared to reenter the League expecting that in due course 'by amicable negotiation' the questions of colonial equality and the separation of the Covenant from its Versailles basis would be cleared up.

Like the speech of the previous May, the explanations and proposals now offered by Hitler were shrewdly calculated to disarm opposition by their fair-spoken promises and apparent willingness to cooperate in guarantees of peace. The promises, however, were hardly sincere and the peaceful intentions scarcely worthy of acceptance. Such a conclusion may be reached not merely as a result of hindsight, after Hitler over and over again broke his pledges, but by an examination of his words. For example, after all he had said in his speech and had written in the memorandum about the iniquity of the Franco-Soviet Pact, one would expect that proposals (2) and (6) would have included the condition that the pact be annulled, but nothing to that effect was said, thus leaving the inevitable impression that the proposals were show pieces rather than honest offers. Moreover, his declaration that Germany would make no territorial demands in Europe was a direct contradiction of a heavily emphasized point in *Mein Kampf*, the text of which Hitler had told de Jouvenel a few weeks before that he would not revise. Instead, he had declared that his acts would take the place of words. His act of March 7 was that of tearing up an important provision of the Versailles Treaty and the whole Locarno Pact, both of which were regarded by France as essential safeguards against a German nation of far greater potential military strength than herself. Now, when Hitler asked the French to accept his word



in good faith, they might well ask which word, that of *Mein Kampf* or that of March 7; and the answer, in the light of Hitler's acts, seemed to be that of an unrevised *Mein Kampf* with its implacable hatred of France.

Yet, faced with the most crucial issue in foreign policy between 1933 and 1938, the stop-gap French Government failed to adopt a decisive and vigorous policy. The man in the street had immediately asked: Is it war? What will England do? In those two questions lay the reasons why the Government wavered. Had mobilization been ordered on March 7, the German troops, according to later accepted reports, would have retreated from the Rhineland leaving to France a bloodless victory. Mobilization, however, meant the risk of war which the Communists on the Left and the *Croix de Feu* on the Right were allegedly willing to take, but which the majority in the Cabinet for one reason or another refused to assume. Some of them apparently shared the viewpoint of a Neo-Socialist deputy who remarked: 'No, I don't think we'll mobilize. We may be more easily beaten in two years' time — but, after all, it means two extra years of life; and something may turn up in the meantime.'<sup>2</sup> Permitting the triumph of this micawberism, the French Government contented itself with reinforcing the frontier garrisons, appealing to the League Council, and arranging for a meeting at Paris of the Locarno Powers to discuss the situation.

But France was not primarily to blame for her weak action, because it was the attitude of the other Locarno guarantors rather than French public opinion which was the decisive factor in France's failure to mobilize. Flandin explained a few months later that '... France was not the only signatory of the Pact of Locarno, and she was obliged to abstain from an attitude that might be disavowed by other signatories.'<sup>3</sup> Poland, alone, immediately signified her readiness to march with France.<sup>4</sup> While Belgium was as much aggrieved by Germany's action as France, she was not only too small, but her internal political situation,

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Werth, *Destiny of France* (London, 1937), pp. 225 ff. Flandin himself later alleged that the Government was asked by Great Britain not to resist the German march into the Rhineland. See Louis Fischer, *Men and Politics* (New York, 1941), pp. 315–16.

<sup>3</sup> As quoted by Paul Milyukov, 'Indivisible Peace,' *Slavonic Review*, XV, 1936–37, 580.

<sup>4</sup> There are two versions of what Poland was ready to do. One is that she was ready to march with France if the latter attempted to force Germany out of the Rhineland; the other, that she would aid France if France were attacked. See Werth, pp. 226–27, and *Bulletin of International News*, XII (1936), 692.

a feature of which was the rapid growth of a Fascist Party, was too uncertain for her to take a leading part in opposing the Third Reich. Italy was at war with Ethiopia. There remained only Great Britain, and she soon made it abundantly clear that she would not run any risks of war on the Rhineland issue.

While Foreign Secretary Eden before the House of Commons on March 9 promised that Great Britain would aid France and Belgium if either were attacked pending 'consideration of the new situation,' he stated that he was 'thankful to say' there was little likelihood of hostilities. This conclusion was based on the statement in the German memorandum of the Reich's 'unchangeable longing for the real pacification of Europe' and its expression of 'willingness to conclude a non-aggression pact with France and Belgium.' While Eden pointed out the seriousness of Germany's unilateral repudiation of international treaties — a procedure already solemnly condemned at Stresa eleven months before — he emphasized the need for rebuilding a better peace structure than that of the 'bad past' which had been cut away. In thus condoning Germany's action and concentrating upon the building of a better future, Eden was not only reflecting the attitude of Conservatives to whom Hitler's anti-Bolshevism made a powerful appeal, but also that of Liberals who had long been using the same arguments for a revision of Versailles that Hitler advanced as justification for breaking it. Moreover, the Rhineland was German territory; therefore, Hitler's troops were on their own soil, not attacking a neighbor. Besides, except among a small minority, suspicion of French 'militarism' had not yet succumbed before the recognition of a greater Nazi danger. That Hitler should be given a chance to make good his promises seemed to be the English consensus.

It is possible that in both France and England another factor which obscured the tremendous significance of Hitler's successful defiance of international law and his wrecking of the West European security system was a belief that his régime was still shaky and insecure. Journalists and interpreters of international events, in seeking reasons for Hitler's remilitarization of the Rhineland, laid great emphasis upon the necessity arising from internal unrest and bad economic conditions, of a striking success abroad in order to maintain the prestige of his régime. It is true that, while industrial production was still increasing, its upward climb was leveling off; that the food situation was unsatisfactory, though not alarming; and that prices were high.

But people outside Germany and Italy were still inclined to underestimate the economic power of a totalitarian state. That the Rhineland coup was hailed with half-concealed delight as a sign of weakness in Hitler's régime foreshadowed the inability of the democracies to comprehend his strategy. In this instance Hitler chose the most opportune moment to immobilize France on the west, thus giving himself a free hand in the east.

England likewise seemed unable to comprehend the relation of Hitler's move to the whole European security problem. Those resounding phrases about collective security under the aegis of the League which had been mouthed so recently by British statesmen in connection with Italy and Ethiopia were uttered in this crisis, to be sure, but by Sarraut and Flandin in the French Parliament on March 10. Here was the crux of both the Ethiopian and the Rhineland crises: Britain was afraid of Mussolini, France of Hitler. Neither could persuade the other that hers was the correct judgment. Each refused to take the risk of war without the support of the other, but each invoked the League and collective security for her own need and ignored it when it did not seem to fit her purpose. Between these divided Powers, Mussolini and Hitler got what they wanted. Since that is the essence of the story there is little need to go into the details of the long-drawn-out negotiations which proved to be another of those farces staged by France and Great Britain in which Mussolini or Hitler, as the case might be, was treated by one Power as a good fellow if only handled properly, and reviled by the other as a villain. The lesser European Governments could but look on.

### *3. The League and the Locarno Powers*

On March 10, the Locarno Powers, excepting Germany, met at Paris, continuing their discussions on March 12 at London. As a result, they announced that Germany had clearly violated both the Versailles and the Locarno Treaties, and that the League Council would meet on the fourteenth at London. Meanwhile, the French Senate ratified the mutual-assistance treaty with Russia on March 12 by a vote of 231 to 52, and Mr. Eden, impressed by the French insistence that Germany must be brought to realize the seriousness of her act before negotiating over the future, tried in vain to persuade the German Government to reduce its forces in the Rhineland to a 'symbolic' number. He was only successful, however, in extracting a promise

that no reinforcements would be sent in, and in evoking another German memorandum of self-justification.

The League Council meetings which lasted from March 14 to 24 were of less importance than the parallel convention of the Locarno Powers. After much debate in which all members of the Council voiced their views, while the Little Entente and Soviet Russia came out strongly in favor of the French point of view, Germany was invited to state her case. Thereupon a dispute ensued between the Council and Germany as to the conditions accompanying the invitation and its acceptance, but at last Herr von Ribbentrop appeared on March 19. Aside from his admission that the incompatibility of the Franco-Soviet and Locarno Pacts was less a legal than a political matter, he made no new contribution to the controversy. On the same day the Council approved a Franco-Belgian motion declaring Germany guilty of violating the Versailles and Locarno Treaties, to which Ribbentrop formally protested. Then, on the twenty-fourth, the Council decided to leave discussion for the time being to the Locarno Powers.

In the meantime, these Powers had worked out an accord between themselves and a proposal to Germany, both of which were adopted on March 19. These measures represented a combination of the French demand for security and the British desire to build a new order in place of the old. In their agreement, France, Belgium, Great Britain, and Italy affirmed that the Locarno obligations were still binding upon them, and that their general staffs should meet forthwith to make technical arrangements for cooperation in case of unprovoked aggression. The proposal to Germany included both an invitation to submit her views concerning the Franco-Soviet Pact to the World Court and a plan for the temporary occupation by an international force, including British and Italian troops, of a buffer zone along the Belgian-German and French-German frontiers. If Germany accepted these terms, she would be invited to negotiate air and non-aggression pacts, a revision of the status of the Rhineland, and mutual-assistance agreements. In addition, the four Powers would recommend to the League Council that an international conference be summoned to consider an effective organization of security, arms limitation, international economic relations, and the German offer to return to the League.

The value of these proposals was somewhat lowered by indications that Italy, whose representative had initialed them,

would not participate in carrying them out as long as sanctions continued, and by the decision of the League Council to take no action with respect to them. In any event, the German Government disclosed on March 24 that the proposals were unacceptable because certain provisions, such as the international policing of the Rhineland, perpetuated German inequality, but yielded to the British suggestion that counter-proposals be made. These were promised after the German plebiscite of March 29, in preparation for which a vigorous campaign in favor of Hitler's policy of 'honor, peace, and freedom' was being waged. The plebiscite, reminiscent of that following Germany's quitting of the League in 1933, resulted in an official return of a 98.8 per cent vote in support of Hitler. Two days later, the Fuehrer's second peace proposal was forwarded to London.

The German note insisted that the Four-Power peace plan of March 19 lacked 'that spirit of understanding of the laws of honor and equality of status' necessary for the conclusion and the sanctity of treaties. It called attention to the fact that the recent plebiscite showed the German people's determination to preserve 'their freedom, their independence, and at the same time their equality of status.' It argued at great length that the previous treatment of Germany had been incompatible with those aims. The note then suggested a time-table for negotiations that would permit a 'cooling-off' period followed by a consideration first of European and later of supplementary peace problems. And finally, it offered a vaguely worded nineteen-point peace plan for Europe which, differing little from Hitler's proposals of March 7, suggested that a conference be called to stop the unlimited competition in armaments by considering such 'practical tasks' as the prohibition of poison gas (already agreed upon in previous conferences) and the abolition of tanks and of heavy artillery.

On April 1, the day this proposal was handed to Eden, the British Government formally confirmed by letters to Belgium and France the agreement of March 19 concerning staff talks. The German Government, taking exception to this act on the ground that it constituted a threat to German security, informed Great Britain on April 3 that Germany could not now postpone the fortification of the Rhineland as requested in the proposal of March 19. Despite this development, which indicated Germany's determination to consolidate her military position regardless of future negotiations, Mr. Eden told the House of Commons on

April 3 that the German peace plan was 'most important and deserving of careful study.' At the same time he carefully explained that the staff talks would 'relate only to the intermediate period of impending negotiations' and would not 'increase our political obligations.'

In view of the German Government's attitude toward the proposals of March 19 and its obvious determination to gain every possible advantage from the dilatory discussions among the Locarno Powers, France was very critical of the German peace plan of March 31. At first the French Government was inclined to reject the proposals out of hand, but finally, on April 8, replied with a peace plan of its own. In a caustic introduction, the French note contrasted the moderate and conciliatory attitude of the Locarno Powers with that of the Reich Government which, prating of honor, independence, and equality, broke treaties and committed hostile acts toward its neighbors. Continuing its appraisal of the German peace plan, the French note stated that its 'contribution to the reconstruction of Europe' was 'more apparent than real' because it left vague or untouched such fundamental issues as the quantitative limitation of air and other armaments, a guarantee of security in place of that destroyed by the reoccupation of the Rhineland, mutual-assistance pacts, and respect for the existing territorial and political status of Europe. The note then offered twenty-five articles which envisaged an agreement whereby the territorial *status quo* would be accepted for a period of twenty-five years, and guaranteed by pacts of mutual assistance; European tension would be relieved by military and economic disarmament, and the observance of treaties assured by the establishment of a powerful commission to operate within the League and to have at its disposal an international police force. This reversion to a familiar French thesis had no more chance of acceptance than Germany's indefinite and incomplete plan of European reconstruction.

#### *4. Germany Triumphant*

On April 10, the four Locarno Powers meeting at Geneva agreed that, as clarification of certain points in the German memorandum of March 31 was needed, the British Government should be instructed to make the necessary inquiries. They also submitted the French note of April 8 to the League, and indicated their willingness to communicate the German memoran-

dum, if Germany desired it. The four Powers, furthermore, decided that staff talks, as previously arranged, should begin on April 15. Although Italy was represented at this conference, her approval of these decisions was reserved. As a matter of fact, since Italy was not only absorbed in the task of completing her Ethiopian conquest, but was also constantly drawing closer to Germany, she did not participate in the general staff conference at London nor in further negotiations among the Locarno Powers. At length on May 6, Mr. Eden dispatched a questionnaire to the German Government asking its attitude concerning the remaining clauses of the Treaty of Versailles, the *status quo* in Europe, the nature and scope of its proposed non-aggression treaties with Eastern European nations, the question of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and the constitution and function of the European arbitration commission proposed on March 31. Although this questionnaire seemed to impress the European Powers, even Soviet Russia, as a sign that England was at last aware of the Nazi menace and of the desirability of 'indivisible' peace, it was really little more significant than any of the other attempts made intermittently since May 21, 1935, to pin Hitler down to a precise and definite commitment. The German Government estimated the situation correctly when it postponed answering the questionnaire to the Greek Kalends.

By June, 1936, other matters had again crowded the problem of reestablishing a security system in Western Europe into the background. France, Belgium, and Great Britain still hoped to negotiate a 'second Locarno,' and for the next few months kept it as much as possible in the forefront of their objectives. After much discussion and a formal meeting on July 23, they invited Germany and Italy to a conference in order to negotiate a new Locarno Agreement and 'to resolve, through the collaboration of all concerned, the situation created by the German initiative of March 7.' Although the invitation was accepted 'in principle,' the proposal of a conference suffered the same fate as the British questionnaire. It was talked about from time to time, but was finally lost to sight underneath the foundations of the new Europe that the 'dynamic' totalitarian states were fashioning to their own tastes.

This non-fulfillment of 'second Locarno' hopes left Germany the victor over France. Not only had Hitler not been compelled to limit his troops in the Rhineland, but also he had not been

forbidden to build fortifications there, as the French had hoped. Thus, since he was in a position to immobilize France, he was free to render valueless her pledges to Eastern European states, including the Soviet Union. France was accordingly reduced to the position of a second-rate Power, while her only compensation, consisting of a more effective guarantee of British assistance through the military staff talks, was of dubious value, since it made her more than ever dependent upon a Government which had consistently refused to accept the view of France and her allies that an increase of Nazi strength was a menace not only to the security of France, but to the peace of Europe as well.

But Hitler was not content to rest on his victory in the Rhineland. By a treaty of friendship with Austria in July 1936 he not only further weakened French influence in Central and South-eastern Europe, but also pushed wider the door to German economic and political predominance in those regions. His treaty with Austria was, consequently, only a little less important than the Rhineland coup, though it caused little excitement in comparison.

#### *5. Austrian Search for Security*

Austro-German relations, after the stir caused by the Nazi *Putsch* of July 1934 had subsided, were relatively calm despite virtual political and economic non-intercourse between the two countries. Von Papen, sent to Vienna by Hitler in order to repair the damage caused by the *Putsch*, succeeded in establishing something of a truce. He even secured the release from prison of many National Socialists and the reopening of over one hundred and sixty branches of the German Gymnasium Association. The results of the Saar plebiscite of January 1935 occasioned some nervousness in Vienna lest the German Government be encouraged to renew the campaign for *Anschluss*, but Hitler himself declared on May 21, 1935: 'Germany has neither the intention nor the desire to interfere in the internal affairs of Austria, or to annex or incorporate Austria.' He added significantly, however, that the German people, as well as others, must have the right of self-determination.

Chancellor Schuschnigg of Austria revealed his attitude eight days later when he stated that, since National Socialism was no concern of Austria's as long as it restricted itself to Germany, Austria would accept the hand of peace from Germany,



even though she had been unable thus far to recognize it. This declaration was no mere rhetoric, for Schuschnigg, genuinely pro-German, was anxious to prove that Austria was a German nation even though she repudiated National Socialism. In the autumn Schuschnigg repeated his views to von Papen, whom he met by chance at a symphony concert, but waited in vain for any formal proposals from Berlin for the establishment of better relations. It was the absence of any open hostility rather than positive acts of rapprochement which enabled the Austrian Foreign Minister, Berger-Waldenegg, to tell the Bundestag in November that Austro-German relations were more normal than at any time since 1932.

Schuschnigg's willingness to discuss rapprochement with Germany was in part, at least, caused by the Italian preoccupations with the Ethiopian crisis. Austro-Italian relations continued to be close, indeed far closer than either Dollfuss had planned or Schuschnigg desired, for both leaders had sought the sympathy and support of France and England as well as of Italy. However, Italian guns at the Brenner Pass were far more tangible than British and French promises. Within Austria, moreover, Starhemberg, leader of the *Heimwehr*, without whose sufferance Schuschnigg could not remain in power, was dependent upon Mussolini for financial support and accordingly was openly pro-Fascist. Austrian dependence upon Italy was attested in October 1935 when she refused to participate in applying sanctions. Nevertheless, Austria realized that she could not be certain of Italian constancy.

On May 25, 1935, even before Italy had weakened her position in Europe by involvement in Ethiopia, Mussolini had given warning that he was not to be relied upon to take sole responsibility for the defense of Austrian independence. Addressing the Italian Deputies, he uttered a word to those 'who would like to petrify us on the Brenner frontier in order to impede any freedom of action in other directions,' explaining that Austria was an Italian problem because it was a European one, but that Italy did not intend to limit her 'historic mission' solely to the Austrian problem. Even more alarming to the Austrians were Mussolini's flirtations with Germany as the Ethiopian crisis developed. German officers were given a cordial reception at the Bolzano maneuvers in the summer; in August the German and Italian newspapers ceased attacks upon one another.

Austria well knew that the collaboration of Italy and Ger-

many could be possible only at her own expense as long as Hitler, who had made *Anschluss* a cardinal Nazi aim, remained in power. Since she could not rely upon Anglo-French good wishes nor upon Italy, there was but one other possible method of maintaining her independence, that of Danubian cooperation. This hitherto fruitless idea had already been revived at the Stresa Conference in April 1935 by France and Italy, perhaps in anticipation of the latter's preoccupation elsewhere. Schuschnigg professed to be in favor of a Danubian pact that would include Germany, because he wanted to avoid the appearance of threatening Germany by such a combination and of subjecting any of the smaller states, including Austria, to German retaliation. But plans for a conference of the Danubian states in June 1935 had to be given up because of the incompatibility of the national interests involved.

In a word, this conflict of interests may be reduced to the formula of *status quo* versus revisionism. The Little Entente states were unwilling to accept the recommendation, agreed upon by Mussolini and Laval, that the same leniency accorded Germany in the matter of rearmament should be extended to Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria. Yugoslavia, moreover, feared that any pact negotiated under the inspiration of the Stresa Front might enhance Italian influence which she was determined to oppose. On the other hand, Hungary would accept no arrangement based upon the territorial *status quo*. Furthermore, she was almost as suspicious of the Stresa Front as were the Little Entente states, though for a different reason. Whereas the latter looked with suspicion upon Franco-Italian cooperation for fear it might mean French retreat from solidarity with her East European allies, Hungary suspected that it might lead Mussolini to give up his championship of territorial revision. Furthermore, Premier Goemboes clearly indicated in a speech on May 28, 1935, that he favored friendship with Germany and a settlement of the Austrian question in order to permit a 'Rome-Berlin Axis,' and eventually a development in the direction of 'the line Warsaw, Vienna, Budapest, Rome, perhaps completed by Berlin.' Thus he envisaged not a Danubian pact but a central European bloc similar to the pre-1914 Triple Alliance. His activities throughout the remainder of 1935, when he openly courted Berlin and Warsaw, suggest that he may have played an important part in killing the Danube pact negotiations and in pushing Schuschnigg into rapprochement with Germany.

While the Austrian Government did not share Hungarian obstinacy over territorial revision and did desire Danubian co-operation, it nevertheless permitted, if it did not openly encourage, the development of another hindrance to a Danubian Pact in the agitation for Hapsburg restoration. The movement for placing Otto on the throne of his forbears had been gaining momentum in Austria since 1933; Empress Zita and the Austrian monarchists had been working unceasingly in the cause. While Goemboes lent no encouragement to the Hapsburgs, Schuschnigg toyed with the idea of supporting Otto's restoration as a means of combating National Socialism. His Government made no attempt to dampen the ardor with which towns and associations of various kinds bestowed honorary citizenship and membership upon Otto. In fact, the Austrian Government passed a law on July 10 restoring, with certain exceptions, the Hapsburg property which had been confiscated after Emperor Karl's flight from Austria. Schuschnigg went even farther. He conferred with Otto in September and sought Mussolini's views of restoration in November; they were reported to be not unfavorable. All this activity alarmed the Little Entente, whose original reason for being was to prevent a Hapsburg restoration. After a meeting at Bled in August 1935, the members declared flatly that their attitude toward this question remained unchanged.

Nevertheless, despite Austria's own contribution to dissension along the banks of the Danube and the attitude of Hungary and the Little Entente states, Schuschnigg made one more attempt early in 1936 at closer collaboration with Austria's neighbors, especially Czechoslovakia. This move was prompted by Hitler's failure to respond to the overtures through von Papen as well as by the fact that Italy was daily becoming more deeply mired in Ethiopia. On a trip to Prague in mid-January, where he delivered a public lecture upon the interdependence of the Danubian states, Schuschnigg found a ready listener in Premier Hodža,<sup>5</sup> if not indeed a prompter, for of all the succession states, Czechoslovakia had been the one most desirous of a Danubian accord. Consequently, the two men discussed the possibility of a pact and also the details of a commercial treaty between Austria and Czechoslovakia. In the negotiations which ensued at London and Paris, Hodža took the more prominent part in attempting, with the encouragement of England and France, to

<sup>5</sup> Hodža was also acting as Foreign Minister in place of Beneš who had been elected President of Czechoslovakia the previous autumn.

bring about a Danubian economic agreement. But Hodža's efforts and Schuschnigg's hopes were in vain. They only aroused the opposition of Germany whose press accused them of trying to encircle her, and the suspicion of Mussolini that they were attempting to break the Rome Protocol bloc. Hungary remained reserved, her Foreign Minister, De Kanya, indicating that she would do nothing without Italy. Likewise, Yugoslavia was more loath to cooperate than before because she was busy at the moment building up trade with Germany to replace the losses resulting from the application of sanctions against Italy. Hence the outcome of lengthy negotiation was another failure of plans for Danubian cooperation even though an Austro-Czechoslovak commercial treaty was signed on April 2.

This failure, together with the unwillingness and inability of Great Britain and France to help Austria materially, left Schuschnigg facing the same alternative as before: Germany or Italy? The outcome of the Rhineland crisis in March helped to solve this dilemma for him in favor of Germany, though Italy made one last attempt to maintain a preponderant position on the Danube. There is some evidence that Hitler pondered the feasibility of marching into Austria instead of the Rhineland; if so, he wisely decided against such a move because once he had thrown up a barrier to French military pressure on the west and assured himself of Italian benevolence, there was little to prevent him from taking over Austria whenever he pleased.

Whether or not Mussolini would yield Austria to Germany remained in doubt for some weeks. His first move, taken when Europe was astir over the Rhineland coup and when Italian armies had turned the tide of Ethiopian battle in their favor, was to sign new protocols with Austria and Hungary at Rome on March 23. These documents bound the three states more closely together than ever before, since they provided for a permanent organ of consultation similar to that of the Little Entente and pledged the three Governments not to undertake 'any important political negotiations appertaining to the Danubian question' without first consulting one another. Thus, by these protocols Mussolini secured a more complete acceptance of Italian leadership than ever before by Austria and Hungary. Although it scarcely seems likely that he would have gone to this trouble if he had intended to relinquish Austria to Hitler, he is reported to have advised Schuschnigg and other Austrians to seek a rapprochement with Germany at this very time. Undoubtedly, he

hoped, whatever happened, to retain control of the situation and to make capital of his own better relations with Germany and of his position, by virtue of the protocols, in Central Europe in such a way as to enhance his chances of bluffing Great Britain and France into accepting his *fait accompli* in Ethiopia as well as his ambitions in the Mediterranean.

Besides preoccupation with these knotty problems of foreign policy, Schuschnigg found himself engrossed, during April, and part of May, with internal matters of no less importance. On April 1, the Federal Diet passed a conscription bill specifying that all males between the ages of eighteen and forty-two could be 'taken by the state for service [which] the public needs with or without arms.' Thus, the long-debated question of Austrian rearmament was settled in much the same manner as the German problem had been solved the year before. Schuschnigg answered Little Entente protests by pleading necessity and pointing out that the clause 'without arms' indicated that Austria did not intend to use conscripts solely for military purposes. This conscription bill, coupled with Schuschnigg's desire to establish friendlier relations with Nazi Germany, brought his rivalry with Starhemberg to the fore because the Chancellor wanted to assure his own control over the conscript army while Starhemberg, pro-Fascist but anti-Nazi, was ambitious to give his *Heimwehr* a key position in it. Finally, May 14, Schuschnigg, as a result of careful planning and of Starhemberg's own mistakes, was able to dismiss the playboy Prince and his friends, including Berger-Waldenegg from the Cabinet, a step in which Mussolini, perhaps unable longer to lend financial aid to the *Heimwehr*, supported Schuschnigg. The latter was now more nearly master of the Austrian Government than ever, and at the same time was rid of elements which might have hindered the German rapprochement.

#### *6. The Austro-German Treaty of July 11*

But even before these internal affairs were straightened out, discussions with the German Ambassador were renewed when on May 1 von Papen declared that he had received official instructions from Berlin to discuss a treaty of friendship. He was himself in favor of it for personal reasons. Never certain of his relations with Hitler — indeed, he had barely escaped the fate of von Schleicher in the Blood Purge of 1934 — he needed such a

coup as a rapprochement with Austria in order to maintain his own prestige. He was also a Papal Chamberlain and was reported to have entertained notions of a revived Holy Roman Empire, including Germany, Austria, and Italy, with a German ruler crowned by the Pope. In playing up this idea and also suggesting to Schuschnigg that a friendly Austria would afford valuable help to the Catholics in Germany, he touched upon the devout Chancellor's weakest point.

Schuschnigg, on his side, was guided and counseled by men no less personally ambitious than von Papen. Foremost was Dr. Guido Schmidt, who, though not a National Socialist, sought to advance his own prospects by making himself an active agent for the betterment of relations with Nazi Germany. Undoubtedly there were financiers and business men, too, who favored such a course in order to increase business and trade. Since Dr. Hjalmar Schacht was making one of his triumphant trade-seeking tours through the Balkans in June, many Austrians were anxious to jump on the German economic bandwagon.

While the details of the negotiations have not yet been revealed, one stumbling-block was apparently a German demand for an Austrian plebiscite on *Anschluss*, which, if granted, would have resulted probably in a majority vote favoring it. More important, however, than any such question was the attitude of Mussolini whom Schuschnigg visited at Rocca della Caminate on June 5. According to the account of Fuchs,<sup>6</sup> participant in the conference, Mussolini was reluctant to give his approval because he was just beginning to believe that he could have a favorable understanding with England as long as his help was needed to curb Germany. While there is enough evidence of an attempt at a revival of the Stresa Front to make this story plausible, the activities at Berlin of Mussolini's daughter, Edda, wife of Count Ciano who became Italian Foreign Minister on June 9, as well as the cordial transactions between Rome and Berlin over air and commercial conventions, cast doubt upon it. It is quite likely, however, that Mussolini did not want to lose Austria as a pawn in his chess game with the other Great Powers, and feared that Schuschnigg was yielding so much to Germany that Austria would no longer be useful to Italy. However that may be, Mussolini gave his approval to the agreement, thus laying another paving stone on the path to the Rome-Berlin Axis.

About a month after his visit with Mussolini, Schuschnigg

<sup>6</sup> Martin Fuchs, *Showdown in Vienna* (New York, 1939), pp. 32-33.

finally agreed to the terms of the treaty with Germany. Apparently he was convinced, quite apart from other considerations, that it would permit Austria to continue her rôle of a 'German' but non-Nazi state and contribute to the peace of Europe as well. If so, he was either extremely gullible or a drowning man grasping at straws. To be sure, the terms which were published as another 'Saturday Surprise' on July 11, 1936, were innocuous enough. Germany recognized the 'full sovereignty of the Austrian Federal State'; each considered 'the internal political structure' of the other country, including the question of Austrian National Socialism, as an internal affair of that country, upon which it would 'exert neither direct nor indirect influence'; finally, Austria promised to follow a policy that would 'always be based on principles which correspond to the fact that Austria acknowledges herself to be a German state.' The agreement was not to affect either the Rome Protocols of 1934 and 1936 or Austria's relations with Italy and Hungary. A cordial exchange of telegrams between Schuschnigg and Hitler, as well as between Schuschnigg and his Italian and Hungarian colleagues, seemed to augur well for a happy future among the Danubian states, Germany, and Italy.

Contemporary observers were not wrong, however, in seeing something ominous behind the Austrian promise to act as a 'German state.' They would have been even more pessimistic had they seen the text of the 'oral' understanding which existed in addition to the published articles of the agreement. It constituted the Trojan horse from which the Nazis could descend upon the overconfident Austrians and their Chancellor. Ostensibly this oral accord placed Austria on an equality with Germany, but since Germany was the stronger, it inevitably gave her all the advantages. Thus, while neither country was to countenance propaganda hostile to the other, each was to permit the existence of the other's organizations, the entrance of newspapers, the singing of songs, the wearing of emblems within the country. This meant that the stronger and more aggressive Nazis could honeycomb Austria with their organizations and propaganda. The promise to restore normal economic relations likewise worked to the advantage of Germany. Most significant of all, however, were the clauses concerning domestic and foreign policy by which Austria promised to proclaim a 'far-reaching political amnesty,' to call upon 'representatives of national circles [meaning Nazi sympathizers]... to collaborate in political

responsibility,' and to exchange views concerning the conduct of foreign policy with Germany.<sup>7</sup> Reduced to straightforward language, Schuschnigg had agreed to let Nazis out of concentration camps, to take their representatives or sympathizers into his Cabinet, and to accept the veto of Germany upon any policy which Hitler did not approve, such as that of cooperation with Czechoslovakia.

On the other hand, the Austrian Chancellor had procured only one concession in this oral agreement. Instead of promising to admit into Austria those members of the Austrian Nazi Legion who had been in Germany since 1934, he merely agreed 'to examine' the question of permitting emigrants to return. Schuschnigg also claimed that there was a definite understanding that the political cooperation of the Austrian National Socialists with the Government would rest upon the condition of 'renunciation of party, membership in the Fatherland Front, recognition of the constitution,' but there is little doubt that these conditions constituted no restrictions for the Nazis in the preparation for their final triumph. In reality it was Glaise-Hors-tenau, admitted to the Austrian Cabinet in July and followed later in the Government by 'representatives of national circles,' who effectively, though more slowly than was at first expected, mined the ground under Schuschnigg's feet and helped light the fuse in March, 1938.

While the contents of the oral agreement were not published, they were fairly well conjectured by contemporaries because of the acts of both Governments. With few exceptions the Austro-German accord was therefore hailed as 'semi-*Anschluss*' and as the beginning of a Fascist bloc in Europe. The immediate and even ultimate consequences for Germany were also fairly clear. Hitler had temporarily renounced a violent conquest of Austria for peaceful penetration. He had overcome, through agreement with Austria and the acquiescence of Italy, one hindrance to economic expansion southeastward. He had taken the first step toward the strangulation of his most determined political opponent, Czechoslovakia, and had reinsured himself against the danger of political, economic, and military encirclement. Thus, he was free to take the offensive and, using advantageously his central position in Europe, to strike at will east, north, south, or west.

<sup>7</sup> Fuchs, *Showdown in Vienna*, pp. 291-94. Cf. G. E. R. Gedyé, *Betrayal in Central Europe* (New York, 1939), pp. 188-91.



Both Paris and London interpreted the Austro-German agreement correctly, but reacted in slightly different ways. Paris tended to take a despairing view of the future, as well she might, since the prophecy of *L'Intransigeant* seemed in process of fulfillment. A year before, May 22, 1935, that newspaper had written: 'One fine day, Germany will be allowed to deal as she thinks fit with Austria without any danger of outside interference, and some years later it will be France's turn.' Now that German economic and political victories in Austria and Eastern Europe were not only weakening the Little Entente, but also drawing Italy into the German orbit, France was more than ever compelled to accept the position of a second-rate Power. This was the principal reason why, henceforth, she was likewise incapable of vigorous opposition to German policy. Even such a staunch liberal newspaper as the *Manchester Guardian* reflected the British desire to avoid trouble when it declared: 'A few years of peace are always a few years gained, and a war that is due in a few years' time may never come off at all.'<sup>8</sup> The crusading spirit that had manifested itself only the year before in the Peace Ballot had burned itself out. Besides, Great Britain, as well as France, had been caught napping in the armament race and at the same time was beset with difficulties not only in Western Europe but also in the Mediterranean and the Far East. The two Powers were on the defensive, fighting diplomatic battles on a dozen fronts. Under the circumstances, British leadership, trying to avoid at all costs open conflict with anyone, inevitably had to compromise.

### 7. *Totalitarian Strength — Democratic Weakness*

Indeed, the German victories in the Rhineland and the agreement with Austria, together with the simultaneous triumph of Italy over Ethiopia and the League, marked the end of 'post-war' Europe and the beginning of a new 'pre-war' era. The League as an instrument of collective security was now reduced to futility which all the lively discussion over reform of the Covenant throughout 1936 and 1937 emphasized rather than concealed. At the same time, partly in consequence of the League's defeat and partly because the value of all treaties had slumped to a new low as a result of Mussolini's and Hitler's callous disregard of them, an atmosphere of lawlessness, far more palpable

<sup>8</sup> *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, July 17, 1936, p. 42.

than the 'international anarchy' existing before 1914, pervaded international relations. Moreover, and for the same reasons, the armament race now began in earnest.

The London Naval Conference, sitting in the winter of 1935-36, had virtually failed to replace the Treaty of 1930, due to expire on December 31, 1936. By the treaty which Great Britain, France, and the United States signed on March 25, 1936, there was no limit placed on the number of ships any nation could build and only certain qualitative restrictions were accepted. Even they could be voided by recourse to an escalator clause. Great Britain undertook to bring other nations into line with these mild restrictions and with the pledge to exchange information concerning naval programs through bilateral negotiations in 1936 and 1937, but at length, together with the United States, nullified the treaty by invoking the escalator clause on April 1, 1938, on account of Japanese naval building.

With respect to European armaments, whereas the dictatorships alone had hitherto seriously begun building up their fighting forces, now everyone, great and small, turned to that task. In 1932, the twenty-nine European states spent a total of \$2,458,000,000 on national defense; in 1934, they spent \$3,519,400,000; and, in 1936, the bill mounted to \$11,185,400,000, or nearly five times the amount four years before. The race was a very unequal one, however, not only among the Great Powers, but also between the five leading states on the one hand and the twenty-four lesser ones on the other, for while Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, and Soviet Russia expended about 71 per cent of the total amount in 1932, they accounted for 92 per cent in 1936. Because of this situation and the failure of collective security, the small states of Europe found themselves, after the crisis of 1936, reduced to almost complete vassalage under this or that great nation.

The full significance of these changes became apparent during the months after July 1936. While there were no more examples of 'Blitz' diplomacy, such as the Rhineland coup, until March 1938, when Germany entered Austria, Europe lived under a constant strain which amounted to little less than that of actual war. The totalitarian states had the advantage at almost every turn, not only because their political systems enabled them to bend every ounce of national energy to the winning of the 'white war' and to move with precision and speed, but also because their 'democratic' opponents were weak materially and

spiritually. The latter were impotent at home because they hated to devote themselves wholly to the task of outstripping their opponents in the building of a war machine and because of conflicting party aims and policies. Unsound within, they could not face the world with a firm will and purpose. Such was the situation which Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin capitalized to the full by aiding and abetting their partisans within each country and by raising such confusing — because controversial — issues in international affairs as the problem of colonies and raw materials, the Comintern, and the danger of Fascism.

Although all the non-totalitarian countries of Europe were handicapped by party strife at home and seemed incapable of cooperation with one another, none better exemplified these weaknesses than France. Her inability to strike a bargain to her own advantage with Great Britain over Ethiopia and the Rhineland, and the inevitable effect upon her Central and East European friends of her own weakened position, have already been indicated. Another misfortune was the coming into power of the Popular Front under the premiership of Léon Blum on June 4, because, in view of the bitterness which had existed in France ever since February 1934, it was bound to keep France divided despite the overwhelming popular victory of the Left Coalition at the polls in April and May. These elections had been accompanied by an alarming outflow of gold, in itself a portent of the way in which the moneyed classes were to refuse cooperation with the Popular Front composed of Communists, Socialists, and Radical Socialists. While Blum acted with energy in putting into effect social and economic reforms long overdue and actually increased production in all lines of industry, he failed to win or to coerce the cooperation of capitalists. In drafting his foreign policy, Blum was handicapped both by the realization that he had not a united nation behind him and by the fact that he was the leader of a coalition in which the Communists on one side were often at odds with the Radicals on the other, and even with his own Socialist Party. This situation helped to account for a foreign policy that was full of idealism, but lacking in resoluteness at a time when a hard fist was more important than a kind heart.

The tragedy of the French situation lay not in the fact that the nation had become Bolshevistic, as Hitler and his propagandists tried to maintain, for that was not true. It arose from the unfortunate timing of the French attempt to meet her social and

economic problems by democratic processes when her security was most seriously menaced by two neighbors who had already pushed theirs into the background by the establishment of totalitarianism. To be sure, this opportunity for confounding the French Government and further weakening France was not lost upon Hitler. Neither Blum nor his successors, struggling with domestic difficulties and longing for peace, could successfully cope with such an adversary who was not only willing and ready to risk war, but had the advantage of being able to choose the time and the place for the next stroke. Thus, all things considered, Hitler in the summer of 1936 was in an enviable position to attempt his immediate threefold objective: the completion of an alliance with Italy, the placation of Great Britain, and the isolation of France from the U.S.S.R. and her other friends in the East.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### REVISION AND CRISIS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

IN VIEW of Hitler's moves in the spring and summer of 1936, it was expected that the next storm center would develop in Eastern Europe. A rising tension between Germany and Czechoslovakia over the Sudeten Germans and increased Nazi activity at Danzig and elsewhere in the Baltic region, as well as Hitler's campaign against Communism, suggested that he was making preparations for a thrust in the direction of Soviet Russia. In a way this surmise was true, but the scene of liveliest conflict between Germany and the U.S.S.R. turned out to be Spain whose civil war, beginning in July 1936, was soon turned into Europe's 'Reichstag fire.' Even before this happened, however, and as a result of the Ethiopian crisis, the Mediterranean had become a diplomatic battle-ground of the Great Powers. The politics of the inland sea as well as those of the Continent constituted the background for the significant rôle which Spain was destined to play both in the Nazi-Communist conflict and in the further crumbling of Franco-British resistance to the German policy of aggrandizement.

#### *1. Mediterranean Politics*

By 1936, international politics in the Mediterranean had become primarily the game of Italy, France, Great Britain, and Turkey, although Soviet Russia looked on from beyond the Straits and Germany showed her hand through her economic relations with the Balkan states and her increasingly close contacts with Italy. Fundamentally, the stake was the command of the Sea and its three openings to the world beyond at Gibraltar, Suez, and the Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. Tied up with this, however, was a host of interests which, though varying widely, were of vital concern to one or more of these countries. What brought the issues to the fore were the changes, little short of revolutionary, resulting from Italy's challenge during

the Ethiopian crisis to the long-established dominance of the Mediterranean by Great Britain, with whom Italy had enjoyed nearly a century of friendly relations.

The Fascist desire to turn the Mediterranean into Italy's *Mare Nostrum* in a real rather than purely sentimental sense of the phrase was inspired by very practical considerations. As eighty per cent of her boundaries were coast line, she would always remain at the mercy of a stronger nation, and consequently fail to become the first-rate Power that Fascist national pride insisted she should be, unless she could develop preponderant fighting forces and strategic air and naval bases. Even more important, however, was the fact that about eighty-six per cent of Italian imports came by way of the sea. Of these, though, only about ten per cent originated within the confines of the Mediterranean proper, while the remainder came through the three gateways. After the conquest of Ethiopia, the Suez Canal became the most important of these because it constituted the only direct highway to the new East African Empire. As for the rest of Italy's possessions, Rhodes and the Dodecanese Islands, Libya, and the virtual protectorate of Albania, they were of value to Italy only if she could maintain sea communications with them. Furthermore, as Italian writers never failed to point out, the shores of the Mediterranean were sprinkled with some million or more Italians who lived outside their homeland and whose welfare was of vital concern to Italy. Thus, Mussolini was not far wrong when he declared that the Mediterranean was life itself to Italy, although he misrepresented the interests of others a little when he added that it was only a route to them.

Until Mussolini's air power and fast, though light, naval units caused the British fleet to scuttle from Malta in the autumn of 1935, Great Britain had come to look upon her preponderance in the Mediterranean as something to be taken for granted. Her position there had once been securely based upon Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, and Suez with its flanking regions of predominant political influence in Egypt to the west and south, and in Palestine and the Arabian lands to the east and southeast. It was thus a rather sudden and shocking realization that Italian air and naval power, mainly concentrated midway between Gibraltar and Suez at the narrowest point in the Mediterranean, but supplemented by bases at Leros in the Dodecanese and at Tripoli and Tobruk on the Libyan coast, might cut British communications in two.

In hastily casting up accounts, two schools of thought as to British policy emerged. Both admitted that the Mediterranean was of great importance as the most direct air and sea route to India and the Far East, but varied in their estimates of what the Mediterranean in and of itself was worth to Britain. One school argued that the Sea was not worth the blood and treasure necessary to maintain British naval control there in the face of a determined opponent such as Italy, and further contended that the best strategy in case of conflict was to bottle up Italy by shutting the gateways at Suez and Gibraltar through which she acquired vital mineral and food supplies. This school demonstrated that Britain could with little inconvenience both reroute her commerce with Persia, India, and the regions beyond by way of the Cape or Panama, and plan to obtain the 11 per cent of her imports originating in the Mediterranean area from elsewhere. The other school, examining a little deeper the British interests in the Mediterranean, pointed to the three or four hundred million pounds of investments in Greece, Turkey, Palestine, Egypt, and the island possessions. It also stressed the political interests bound up both in the concept of prestige, always important among not only the Near Eastern but also the Indian and Far Eastern peoples, and in the traditions and responsibilities Great Britain had inherited in the lands of the Arabs and Jews of the eastern Mediterranean. To pull out of that region, they alleged, would be an admission of impotence, a serious blow to imperial strategy, an economic loss, and a repudiation of obligations to the Jews in Palestine. Though, as usual, the British Government seemed slow to make up its mind, its attempt to mend fences and to placate Mussolini indicated its determination to stay in the Mediterranean, on a friendly footing with Italy if possible, but in any case to stay.

While British interests other than that of the route through the Sea were concentrated at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, France was mainly concerned with the western half. To be sure, she obtained 55 per cent of her oil supplies by way of the Mediterranean from the wells of Iraq, Rumania, Russia, and the Dutch East Indies; she also valued the route to her Far Eastern possessions as well as the trade and historical ties with the Levant. But by 1936, her political interests in the Levant states — Syria, the Lebanon, and Jebel ed Druz — proved to be more sentimental than real, while her investments, predominant in the former Ottoman Empire, had sunk to a relatively low

level. Furthermore, France was dependent upon British benevolence for the protection of her interests in the Levant. On the other hand, the triangle of strategic aero-naval bases located at Toulon in France, at Algiers and Bizerte on the North African Coast, supplemented in 1937 by new ones at Mers-el-Kebir near Oran, and Ajaccio in Corsica, represented French concentration upon both her own coastal security and the maintenance of communications with the province of Algeria and the protectorates of Tunis and Morocco.

It is easy to understand why Frenchmen valued most highly Algeria and the neighboring areas. The former, strategically important because of the rapidly developing cross-desert links between it and the great Equatorial African Empire, was looked upon, together with its hinterland, as a reservoir of troops, even though the belief that the number of available soldiers in Africa could ever equal the difference between forty-five million Frenchmen and sixty-five million Germans was certainly ill-founded. Moreover, Algeria proper was administratively a French province which provided a livelihood for a million Frenchmen. Finally, it together with Tunis and Morocco held the promise of great economic rewards both as places for investment of capital and as sources of those foods and minerals needed to make France quite self-sufficient. Already their commerce was the most important factor in making Marseilles not only the largest port in France, but also in the whole Mediterranean. Since the disturbing rise of Italy, France as well as England had taken steps, especially through the building of an east-west railway from Tunis to the Atlantic, to develop an alternate route between France and North Africa if the Mediterranean were ever cut off, although France still hoped to retain control of this all-important link between homeland and empire.

Besides the major conflict caused by Italian 'dynamics' on the one hand and Anglo-French conservatism on the other, there were lesser though significant sources of friction in the Mediterranean area. Germany's trade drive into the Balkan region, for instance, had by 1936 raised the question whether or not increasing commercial ties with Bulgaria, Greece, Yugoslavia, and Turkey might not portend a preponderant political influence, particularly since in return for their exports of food and raw materials these countries were often compelled to take German-made armaments. In matters of trade, however, German competition seemed to be quite as detrimental to Italy as to France and England.



In the fermenting Moslem and Arab unrest of the time lay yet another cause of discord in the Mediterranean. This turbulence arose out of the inevitable attempt of the Moslem peoples to throw off foreign domination which, as they progressed in the ways of the West, became more and more irksome to them. Since Great Britain and France were far greater Moslem Powers than Italy, and the opportunities for embarrassing them manifest, Mussolini tried to make capital of Moslem grievances as Kaiser William II had done before and during the World War. The radio station at Bari broadcast anti-British propaganda to the Arabs while Italian agents and money were suspected of finding their way into more than one group of agitators who were trying to stir fellow Arabs against France or England. In March 1937 Mussolini rather bombastically proclaimed himself the protector of Islam while on a visit to Libya. Considering the harsh treatment meted out to Italy's Moslem opponents in Tripoli and Cyrenaica and the implications of the Fascist talk about reviving the Roman Empire, it is doubtful if these efforts of Italy won many adherents, though they may well have helped to aggravate a situation serious enough in itself.

Even without Italian propaganda, two facts would account for the greatly heightened manifestations of unrest and the movements for independence among the followers of Mohammed. One was the visible weakening of the French and British position as a result of Italy's challenge. Egypt began to stir in the autumn of 1935; riots and other evidences of native discontent occurred in Algeria, Tunis, and Morocco in the spring of 1936; and the Arabs turned upon both the Jews and the British administrators in Palestine at the same time. The other phenomenon was the development of strong, independent Arabic and Moslem countries. One of these, Saudi Arabia, had been expanded by the genius of Ibn Saud to include much of the Arabian peninsula, excepting Iraq, the Yemen, and a fringe of British protectorates. Ibn Saud, however, signed treaties of 'Alliance, Moslem Friendship, and Arab Brotherhood' with Iraq in 1936 and with the Yemen in 1937. Likewise, Saudi Arabia and Egypt were linked by a treaty of friendship in May 1936. The non-Arabic but Moslem country which became even more powerful was Turkey, whose reversal of her two-century-long trend toward dissolution is one of the marvels of recent history. Under her leadership the Moslem states of Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan signed with her the Pact of Saadabad on July 9, 1937, promising

each other non-aggression and consultation. Thus they suggested, without as yet fully realizing, the potentialities of cooperation among these former vassals of the Great Powers. As a result of such trends Great Britain and France were learning 'that whereas Moslem allies are an asset, Moslem dependencies are a liability.'<sup>1</sup>

## 2. *Peaceful Revision in the Mediterranean*

More than a year before the Pact of Saadabad, however, Turkey had raised herself to a leading position among the independent states of the Near East by her success in securing the revision of the Straits Convention. The arrangement which had been agreed upon at Lausanne in 1923 provided for the demilitarization of the Straits and the Sea of Marmara, laid down rules for the passage of merchant and naval vessels through these waters, and set up an international commission, of which Turkey was President, to see that the terms of the Convention were carried out. The League Council among whose numbers Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan were to assume an especial responsibility with respect to the Convention, was to take measures to maintain the freedom of the Straits and to defend the demilitarized zone in case of attack. Turkey had never liked the limitations on her sovereignty which international control of the Straits implied. As hopes of disarmament and of collective security dwindled, especially after 1933, Turkey began discussing the question of revision, but did not press it until 1936 when two factors largely determined a virtual Turkish demand for it. One was the Italo-Turkish tension which, dating from 1934 when Mussolini declared that Italy's future lay in Asia and Africa, was heightened by the Italian fortification of Leros as well as by Turkish participation in sanctions and in the naval pact with Great Britain of January 1936. The other was the breakdown of the League system resulting in a situation where, among the four Powers whose duty it was to see that the guarantees were executed, Italy was at odds with Great Britain and France, while Japan was no longer a member of the League.

The Turkish request for a conference to reconsider the Straits question was well received, coming as it did upon the heels of

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Monroe, *The Mediterranean in Politics* (Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 40. This is the best book on the subject of Great Power interests in the Mediterranean in 1936-37.

the German unilateral denunciation of treaties. Italy, however, refused to take part in the proceedings which were opened at Montreux, Switzerland, on June 22, and, even after the abandonment of sanctions two weeks later, remained officially aloof though privately in touch with some of the negotiators. None of the Great Powers objected to Turkey's fortification of the Straits area, but Great Britain strenuously opposed the abolition of the International Commission. On this point she at length yielded, agreeing to the exercise of complete Turkish sovereignty over the Straits, when she procured a compromise upon the question of passage of naval vessels upon which she was at odds with Soviet Russia. Great Britain wanted the Straits and the Black Sea to be treated as open waters, while the U.S.S.R. desired the right to send naval units out through the Straits without permitting non-Black Sea Powers to send theirs in. The agreement finally reached provided that Black Sea Powers might send their ships through the Straits under provisions concerning notification and procedure, while non-Black Sea Powers were restricted to a maximum global tonnage in the Black Sea for all Powers of 30,000 of which no one Power could have more than two-thirds for a time limit of twenty-one days. An escalator clause permitted increase of the global tonnage to a maximum of 45,000 tons *pari-passu* with the increase of the largest Black Sea fleet, which in effect meant Russia's. A further measure, supported by France and the Little and Balkan Ententes because it was looked upon as strengthening collective security, provided that belligerent Powers could send warships through the Straits in carrying out provisions of the Covenant or 'in cases of assistance rendered a state victim of aggression in virtue of a treaty of mutual assistance binding Turkey...' (Art. 19).

Thus the principal gainers by the Montreux Convention signed by Turkey, Great Britain, France, the U.S.S.R., Japan, and the Balkan nations on July 20, 1936, were Turkey and the U.S.S.R. The former had, as the Turks put it, secured the key to her own house. She proceeded forthwith to rush troops into the former demilitarized area and to begin the building of fortifications. Soviet Russia's gains were just as significant, since she could now send her warships in and out of the Black Sea without fear that non-Black Sea Powers could enter in sufficient strength to threaten Russian security, as had been the case at the close of the World War. Some critics of the Convention questioned whether, in view of the close relations that had existed almost

continuously since 1921 between Turkey and the U.S.S.R., the keys to the Straits had not actually been placed in Soviet hands. This opinion was held especially in Germany and Italy and also among conservatives in Great Britain.

On the other hand, the obvious advantage of thus being able to court Turkish favor while the balance of power in the Mediterranean was so precarious enabled Turkey henceforth, and especially as long as the U.S.S.R. was formally committed to neither side, to enter the ranks of those states, like Poland and Yugoslavia, who could attempt to play one group of Powers against the other. She experienced what was termed an 'Anglo-Turkish honeymoon' after the signature of the Montreux Convention, but also continued economic relations with Germany whose salesmen were prepared before the ink of the Convention was dry to sell her the building material and armaments for the new fortifications. Even Turkish relations with Italy, who looked upon the new Convention as an attempt to weight the scales against herself, were improved as a result of a parley in Milan between the Turkish Foreign Minister and Count Ciano on February 2-3, 1937, although the hoped-for Italian ratification of the Montreux Convention was not forthcoming until May 2, 1938, when it occurred as a result of improved Anglo-Italian relations.

British acquiescence in Turkey's desired revision of the Lausanne Straits Convention was but part of the general policy of conciliation in the eastern Mediterranean with whose Moslem populations Great Britain was anxious to prove her friendship. In pursuance of this policy Britain achieved her greatest success with Egypt whose nationalist aspirations had clashed ever since 1882 with British conceptions of imperial interests, particularly those centering around the defense of the Suez Canal and the administration of the Sudan. In 1922, Great Britain had recognized Egyptian independence subject to reservations which gave herself complete control over such matters as defense, foreign policy, and protection of foreigners until an agreement could be concluded 'by free discussion and friendly accommodation on both sides.' But, after recurrent crises which made it obvious that British naval and military preponderance rendered Egyptian 'independence' illusory, further negotiations resulted in a deadlock that remained unbroken until 1936 when both Great Britain and Egypt found common ground in their fear of Italy. The Egyptian nationalists, who had obstructed a complete

agreement with England, had no desire to exchange one master for another, nor, for that matter, to become a battle-ground between Great Britain and Italy whose reinforcement of troops in Libya was particularly alarming. England, on the other hand, realized that a loyal ally could better aid her in resisting Italian expansion than a weak and hostile dependency. Thus, the discussions which began at Cairo on March 2 resulted in a treaty of alliance signed at London on August 26, and ratified on December 22, 1936.

The treaty once more recognized Egypt as an independent sovereign state whose entrance into the League of Nations Great Britain promised to support. The troublesome questions of British military forces in Egypt and the administration of the Sudan, upon which previous negotiations had broken down, were settled. Great Britain promised to support the Egyptian demand for abolition of the capitulatory régime at a subsequent international conference. The two countries were to be represented at one another's capitals by ambassadors and were not to adopt toward foreign countries an attitude 'inconsistent with alliance, nor to conclude political treaties inconsistent with the provisions of the present treaty' (Art. 5). Provision was made for consultation in case of a dispute with a third party. If either of the contracting parties became involved in war without having violated the League Covenant or the Paris Pact of 1928, it was further stipulated that the other should 'immediately come to his aid in the capacity of an ally' (Art. 7). The terms of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, however, were less important than the spirit in which they were received both in England and Egypt. Debates in both Parliaments suggested that the two countries were indeed as 'anxious to consolidate the friendship and the relations of good understanding between them' as the preamble of the treaty had stated they were.

While there was a lingering doubt in British minds as to whether Egypt, because of Fascist pressure from without and within the country, would continue to maintain a benevolent attitude toward Great Britain, the Egyptians could not complain of British fulfillment of her promises in the treaty. With London's cooperation, a convention was signed at Montreux on May 8, 1937, providing for the abolition of the capitulations, and the League of Nations on May 26 admitted Egypt to membership. These two measures, in addition to the Anglo-Egyptian alliance, represented a more complete emancipation of Egypt

than she had enjoyed for more than two thousand years. They also removed from Great Britain's neck a millstone that had nearly dragged her beneath the waves of the Mediterranean on more than one occasion in the past fifty years.

The disturbances which broke out in Palestine in the spring of 1936, however, brought to the fore once more a problem that Great Britain has even yet failed to solve. It was a far more complicated one for Great Britain than the Egyptian question, because as a mandatory for the League of Nations in Palestine she was harassed by the conflicting nationalist aspirations of the Jews and the Arabs, neither of whom she wanted to offend, yet one of whom she was bound to anger by whatever step she might take. At bottom the conflict between the Jews and Arabs arose because the attempt to build a Jewish National Home countered the Arabs' wish to include Palestine in a great independent Arab federation or united nation. Furthermore, both the Jews and the Arabs claimed, though without entire justification in either case, that Great Britain had promised them their hearts' desire.

Several factors besides the stimulus offered by the Ethiopian crisis brought matters to a head in 1936. One was the Arab wish for independence and for the self-governing institutions promised by the terms of the mandate but thus far delayed because of the rivalry between the two populations. Another was the fear that unless the Arabs acted soon, the increasing influx of Jews would put the former in the minority by the end of another decade. Therefore, Italian propaganda, the example of successful Arab agitation in Egypt and Syria, and the active support on the part of Arab leaders in near-by lands easily inflamed the passions of the Arabs in Palestine. On the other hand, the Jews, who had staked much both in lives and investments and who in view of the rising anti-Semitism throughout the world needed the homeland more than ever, were aroused as never before to battle for what they believed were their rights. Thus the national feelings on both sides presented the type of psychological problem in the face of which the British are always 'at their worst.'<sup>2</sup> They failed to understand why, since the advent of Jewish immigrants had brought economic benefits to the Arabs, the latter should resent their coming; and why, since the Jews desired peace and prosperity, they had failed to win the cooperation of the Arabs.

In characteristic fashion the British Government attempted to compromise, but only incurred the charge from each side of

<sup>2</sup> See Elizabeth Monroe, *The Mediterranean in Politics*, pp. 53 ff.

attempting to favor the other. The Jews, believing that Arab agitation was the work of a few *effendis* interested solely in their own selfish political ambitions, demanded firmness from Great Britain, while the Arabs professed to believe that preponderant Jewish influence at London could only be successfully met by Arab violence in Palestine. As a result of acts of violence and a general Arab strike which lasted from April until October 12, 1936, Great Britain increased her forces in Palestine and in November sent out a Royal Commission headed by Lord Peel to investigate the causes of disturbance and to make recommendations for the removal of any legitimate grievances. The Peel Commission Report, published July 7, 1937, among other recommendations suggested the division of Palestine into three parts: one Jewish, one Arab, and one — including Jerusalem and Bethlehem with a corridor to the sea — to be a new mandate serving the primary purpose of assuring the inviolability and freedom of the Holy Places. Although the scheme received the approval of the British Government, it did not win the hearty approbation of anyone else. Britain continued, however, to attempt a solution by means of a new commission and round-table talks, with the result that the virtual civil war in Palestine dragged on. As Viscount Samuel declared in 1939, the controversy continued to spread and the issues seemed 'to become more and more tangled and confused.'<sup>3</sup> Thus, Britain acquired a new millstone to hamper her freedom of action in the Mediterranean.

Nevertheless, the disturbances in Palestine did not prevent Great Britain from consolidating other friendships in the eastern Mediterranean nor looking to her defenses there. It was no accident that King Edward VIII vacationed in the Adriatic and the Aegean in August and September 1936. Though traveling incognito, he was cordially received in Yugoslavia, Greece, and Turkey, all of whose ports would be most valuable to Great Britain should an armed conflict arise with Italy. In October, British squadrons called at Greek key ports while in November a Turkish force visited Malta. In view of the situation in Palestine, these cordial relations with a 97 per cent Moslem nation were of inestimable value. Also during the summer and early autumn Sir Samuel Hoare, First Lord of the Admiralty, as well as military and naval experts, surveyed the state of British defenses and the possibility of improving them at Malta, Cyprus,

<sup>3</sup> Viscount Samuel, 'Palestine: the present position,' *Contemporary Review*, July 1939, reprinted in *International Conciliation*, No. 352 (September 1939), 426-33.

and other points in the eastern Mediterranean. These tours of inspection, together with intensive diplomatic and naval activity, served to underline the apparently trivial but nonetheless significant words uttered by Hoare on his return to London, September 22, that British policy in the Mediterranean 'has not changed.'

The events in Egypt and Palestine inevitably affected the situation in the French mandates of Syria and the Lebanon. There the leadership among a hodge-podge of religious sects was taken by the Sunni Moslem Arabs of Syria whose demands for independence received an unprecedented support from the various Christian and Moslem sects of Latakia, Lebanon, and Jebel ed Druz as well as Syria proper. The reasons for the agitation, which culminated in a general strike in Syria from January 11 to March 1, 1936, were similar to those which precipitated trouble in Egypt and Palestine, with the additional factors of bad economic conditions and a more openly Fascistic nationalist party — the Grey Shirts. Although France opened negotiations with a Syrian delegation sent to Paris on March 27, not much was accomplished until the Blum Government took office in France on June 4. Then a treaty was drawn up and signed on September 9, which provided for Syria's independence at the end of three years under certain conditions. While sovereignty over Latakia and Jebel ed Druz was transferred to Syria with stipulations fixing the character of the administration and providing for continued French military occupation during a period of eight years, the Lebanon was dealt with in a separate treaty of November 13 by which it was given much the same promises as Syria. But, even though both the Syrian and Lebanese Treaties were approved by their respective Parliaments, their ratification was indefinitely postponed by France with the result that they remained promissory notes rather than actual achievements. One reason for delay in putting the treaties into effect was a disputed boundary line between the Lebanon and Syria. Another and more significant one was the question of minorities, among whom the Turks of Alexandretta raised the greatest difficulty because they were championed by Turkey.

The Sanjak of Alexandretta, in which Turks claimed without justification to be an absolute majority, had enjoyed a degree of administrative autonomy within the Syrian mandate as a result of agreements between France and Turkey in 1921 and 1926. Nevertheless, arguing that the status of Alexandretta was that of a French dependency and not a part of the Syrian mandate, the



Turkish Government demanded that it be separated from Syria and made an independent state. France protested the Turkish view, but on January 27, 1937, after the matter had been referred to the League Council, accepted a compromise solution by which Alexandretta was to retain full independence internally, but was to have a monetary and customs union with Syria, who would also control its foreign relations under certain limitations. France and Turkey were to guarantee the territorial integrity of the Sanjak, while the League Council was to approve the form of government and act as a court of appeals in case of disagreement between the Sanjak and Syria. Although an attempt was made to apply these stipulations, Turkey became dissatisfied with them and on July 4, 1938, concluded a new treaty with France by virtue of which the Sanjak became, on September 4, the Republic of Hatay, governed by a parliament with a majority of Turkish members and policed by Turkish and French troops.

All in all, France was less successful in dealing with the Levant mandates than England had been in her relations with Egypt. On the other hand, the French experienced no such difficulties in Syria as the British in Palestine, although Arab agitation in North African French territories created a somewhat comparable situation without arousing the world-wide interest that Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine had done. Both Powers, however, could have felt fairly well satisfied with the results of their efforts to meet the parallel challenges of Italy and the Arab world had it not been for the outbreak of revolution in Spain and the international complications arising from it.

### 3. *The Spanish Revolution*

Revolution and foreign intervention were by no means new in Spain. 'The Spanish struggle is nearly over and I rejoice in thinking that it is. The grand object, to which I admit no other equal, is the preservation of the peace of Europe. . . . What do you think of the prospects of the holders of the Spanish stock? Have you still got yours? I have mine.'<sup>4</sup> That was written by one Englishman to another, not in 1936, but in 1823. Between those dates there had been many more occasions when revolution in Spain and the danger of its upsetting the peace of Europe and the pocketbooks of investors had been a major anxiety. While

<sup>4</sup> David Ricardo, *Minor Papers on the Currency Question, 1809-1823* (J. H. Hollander, ed., Baltimore, 1932), pp. 220-23.

the issues on the surface had changed from time to time, the fundamental causes of Spanish civil conflict remained much the same. In the nineteenth century the issues were labeled 'liberalism' versus 'conservatism'; in 1936, they were 'Communism' versus 'Fascism.' Beneath these catchwords, however, lay the fact that Spain had lagged overlong behind the rest of Europe, politically, socially, and economically.

In the nineteenth century Spain had failed to resolve the conflicts between her old feudal régime and the new revolutionary formula of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. In the twentieth, the slowly developing industrial revolution overlaid with social problems the unresolved conflicts of the past. The Government, noted for its corruption and lack of civic consciousness, was linked in the minds of the masses with an inefficient and top-heavy army, a well-to-do, state-supported church, and a relatively small group of landlords and industrialists. On the other hand, liberals, centering in university circles, and radicals, including both an industrial and a much larger agricultural proletariat, were divided, not only by different political theories, but also by provincialism and the Spanish vice of exaggerated individualism. The opposition to the monarchical régime, resting on its three pillars of the privileged groups, was further weakened by the poverty, ignorance, and illiteracy of the Spanish masses.

Following the World War, during which Spain enjoyed a short period of prosperity, the depression helped to increase discontent and unrest. The resort to dictatorship under Primo de Rivera and Berenguer (1923-31) delayed but could not stop the drift toward revolution which finally came in April 1931 when the King fled the country and a Republic was proclaimed. From the first, the Republican régime faced an extremely difficult situation. It had to deal not only with the economic and financial problems arising from the world-wide depression, but also with constant political pressure from two directions. On the Left, the Socialists and Anarchists demanded radical economic and social reforms which the moderate Republicans, democratic and anti-clerical though they were, hesitated to put into effect. On the Right, the conservatives, representing army, church, and landlords, stubbornly opposed any reforms which meant loss to them of former power and privilege. In spite of this situation the Republican Government from 1931 to 1933 enacted a liberal constitution, passed laws providing for the division of large

estates, higher wages, collective bargaining, social insurance, the separation of church and state, together with the dissolution of the Jesuit Order and the secularization of education. By the elections of November 1933, however, a conservative coalition, welded together by hatred of the reforms, carried the day, with the result that during the next two years much of the previous legislation was nullified or modified. By the end of 1935, these swings of the political pendulum had resulted in a sharply divided country without any strong, moderate, center group to strike a balance between the two opposing ones.

In the election campaign of 1936, the Right was composed of such groups as Gil Robles' *Popular Acción*, primarily a Catholic party; the openly Fascistic Spanish Phalanx, whose militia later played a prominent part in the rebel forces; Carlists, who were remnants from the nineteenth-century civil wars; other monarchists; and Right Center parties who were willing to accept a republic as long as it was conservative. Needless to say, the sympathies of the army and the church were openly on the side of this motley group who were held together by their avowed enmity toward 'Marxist' influences and their scarcely concealed dislike of a truly democratic and progressive régime.

On the Left, a Popular Front had been formed under the Liberal Republican, Azaña, former Premier during the first two years of the Republic. This coalition was no less motley than that of the Right, consisting as it did of middle-class republican parties; Catalanian and Basque Nationalists, the latter as piously Catholic as any party on the Right; Socialists who were themselves split into moderate and radical wings and were allied with the General Workers' Union (U.S.T.); Anarcho-Syndicalists with their own Confederation of Labor (C.N.T.); Communists whose total numbers have been variously estimated from two to fifty thousand; and the anti-Stalinist Marxists known by the initials P.O.U.M.<sup>5</sup> It is obvious that this coalition was even less coherent than the Popular Front which had been organized at the same time in France. Furthermore, despite the charges launched against it, both inside and outside Spain, that it was inspired and directed by Moscow, and despite the fact that the Communists, since they were more active and more interested in unity than the many times larger Socialist and Anarcho-Syndicalist groups, did undoubtedly exert an influence far out of proportion to their

<sup>5</sup> Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista, meaning Workers' Party of Marxist Unification.

numbers, the Spanish Popular Front was, if anything, less radical than that in France where many of the things now proposed in Spain had been accomplished years before.

In view of later propaganda, the program of the Spanish Popular Front, which was adopted on January 16, 1936, is worth summarizing. It proposed: (1) Amnesty for some thirty thousand political prisoners held since the revolt of 1934 against the Rightist Government; (2) restoration of positions to those deprived of them for political reasons; (3) maintenance and enforcement of the Constitution; (4) reform of the courts and investigation of alleged police and army brutality; (5) a new tenancy law and reductions of agrarian taxes and rents; (6) repeal of the law granting compensation to large landholders whose estates had been seized; (7) some degree of government regulation and control of industry; (8) an extensive program of public works; (9) stricter regulation of banking; (10) general tax reforms; (11) social legislation reforming and extending that of the first biennium; (12) the development of public education; (13) reestablishment of the principles of regional autonomy; and (14) in foreign policy, adherence to the Covenant of the League of Nations. The progressive character of these proposals as well as the reasons why the Right would oppose them is self-evident. That they fell short of being 'red' is further emphasized by the fact that such proposals as the nationalization of the land, advanced by the Socialists, were rejected.

In the election of February 16 that was held under the auspices of a Rightist Government, the Right won a small majority of popular votes, but the Popular Front acquired a majority of seats in the Cortes, the unicameral legislature to which the Government, according to the Constitution, had to be responsible. It is interesting to note, however, that the Left received its majority around Madrid and the more highly industrialized eastern seaboard, while the Right was stronger in the southern and western sections where a few months later Franco made his easiest conquests. Charges and countercharges concerning the elections prove little except that both Left and Right exerted every effort to influence or falsify the returns in a land where manipulation of balloting was proverbial. Furthermore, the accusations of President Zamora, forced out of office even before the outcome of the election was clear, are countered by the testimony of the Premier, Portela Valladares, that both Gil Robles, rabid Rightist, and General Franco came to him on

February 17 to propose the establishment of a dictatorship backed by the defeated parties of the Right.<sup>6</sup>

Against such a background of bitterness and determination on both sides to win by force if legal means failed, the Popular Front Government, whose members were drawn entirely from Republican parties, attempted to put into effect the January platform. Its task was even more difficult than that of its Republican predecessor in 1931-33. Rightist groups with their semi-military party organizations resorted to violent tactics in a campaign of provocation similar to that of the Fascists in Italy and the Nazis in Germany before their advent to power. Their object, like that of their models, was to discredit the existing régime and thus pave the way toward seizure of power. Meanwhile, the radical elements behind the Popular Front as well as the peasants were no less energetic in developing their party militias and in resorting to direct action against industrialists, landlords, and the church. Thus, the Government became a football between contending factions while its efforts to strengthen its own position by weeding the reactionary elements out of the national army served only to bring the grievances of the Right to a head and to push the cashiered generals into a plot against the Republican régime.

The outbreak of the revolution, which was planned with the knowledge and encouragement of Berlin and Rome, was hastened by the Government's steps early in July to remove more officers from the active list and by the murder on July 13 of Sotelo, a monarchist deputy who had replaced Gil Robles as reactionary leader of the Cortes and had openly called for a rebellion. He was killed by government shock police allegedly in retaliation for the murder of one of their own officers by a Rightist gang. Taking advantage of the feeling aroused by this crime, the army raised the standard of rebellion at Melilla in Spanish Morocco on July 17, and in Spain itself on the following day. General Franco, who had been relegated to the Canary Islands by the Government, was welcomed as the Commander-in-Chief of the rebel forces when he arrived in a plane put at his disposal by English and Spanish friends. He found in the course of the next few days that he had supporting him about ninety per cent of the officers and two-thirds of the rank and file of the Spanish army. He was less fortunate with respect to the navy and the

<sup>6</sup> See Robert Sencourt, *Spain's Ordeal* (1940), pp. 70-71; and Alvarez del Vayo, *Freedom's Battle* (1940), p. 6.

air forces, a larger proportion of which remained loyal to the Government. Nevertheless, with the aid of Italy and Germany, he was able to ferry Moorish troops and Foreign Legionaries from Morocco to the mainland and to establish air supremacy fairly soon after the opening of hostilities. As early as July 25 his supporters had established a provisional government at Burgos which remained the capital of the Nationalists, the name which their propagandists soon popularized in place of 'Rebels.'

A crisis in the Government at Madrid immediately followed the first reports of the revolt. Although this resulted in the shifting of Premiers, no radical change occurred in the Cabinet until September 4, when for the first time Socialists and Communists took offices along with Republicans under the premiership of the Socialist leader, Caballero. The greatest difficulty facing the Loyalists, as they soon came to be called, was their shortage of trained men as well as their inability to get supplies from outside as the Nationalists were doing. In addition, their task of improvising an army was rendered more than ordinarily difficult because of the individualistic ideas of the Anarcho-Syndicalist volunteers and the inevitable quarrels over control and strategy among the various factions adhering to the Popular Front.

Meanwhile, Franco found it fairly easy to gain control of the Portuguese border through which supplies could reach him, and then to advance from the southwest toward Madrid, scattering with airplanes and tanks the poorly equipped and ill-trained Loyalist forces which attempted to stop him. In the north, at the same time, General Mola had driven a wedge between the Loyalists and the French border at Irun, after which he advanced to converge with Franco on Madrid. Nothing seemed likely to prevent the Nationalists from taking the city when they reached its outskirts on November 7. But the Loyalist Government, which had fled to Valencia on the previous night, after widening its political base by taking in Anarcho-Syndicalist Ministers, had been able to prepare for the defense of the capital and to prevent what General Mola had called the 'fifth column' of Nationalist sympathizers within the city from giving the aid which had been anticipated. Of great importance to the Loyalists was the arrival early in November of the first detachments of the International Brigades that had been recruited among sympathizers of all nationalities. Much more valuable, however, were the airplanes and other armament which began to reach Madrid from Soviet

Russia at the same time. To the surprise of everyone, including the Nationalists who had already made plans for taking over the administration of the city, Madrid held out. By the end of the month it had become clear that the Nationalists had suffered their first major reverse and that the initial phase of the civil war had ended without the complete and easy victory over the Popular Front which had been expected in July.

#### *4. The Powers and Spain: Non-Intervention*

Very soon after the outbreak of the civil war, the Great Powers began to take an active interest in it. Again, the reasons were inherent in the geographical situation of Spain, though they were often hidden beneath the current ideological debate which was primarily important because it molded public opinion all over Europe. The Loyalists were soon dubbed 'Reds' by all who feared or professed to fear Communism, while the rebels were called 'Fascists' by their opponents. Undoubtedly, Soviet Russia saw in the Spanish Civil War a baptism by fire of the whole Popular Front movement inaugurated by the Comintern in 1935, while Hitler and less obviously, though nonetheless firmly, the Vatican, argued that it was an object-lesson in the fatal effects of Bolshevik poison. Nevertheless, the European Powers were most concerned because of Spain's strategic position and her economic potentialities.

Spain at the western tip of the Mediterranean is better placed strategically than Turkey at the eastern end, for, with the strip of Spanish Morocco across the Straits of Gibraltar and the Balearic Islands to the east, she bestrides the British and French imperial communications through the Mediterranean as well as the most important Italian trade route. Also the Spanish Atlantic coastline and the Canary Islands put her in a position to threaten, if not to control, the alternate imperial routes of both France and Great Britain. From the viewpoint of the Continent, Spain might act in alliance with Germany or Italy as a threat to France, thus compelling her to divide her forces and fight on two fronts. Little wonder that France fought for a hundred and fifty years to break up such a relationship in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and allied herself with Spain in the eighteenth. Little wonder that Great Britain fought to oust Napoleon from the peninsula, that France went to war in 1870 when fearful of a Hohenzollern alliance between Prussia and Spain, and

that both powers continued to hope that Spain would remain weak and neutral as she had been for decades. On the other hand, the advantages to both Italy and Germany of a strong, faithful Spanish ally in case of conflict with Great Britain or France are equally evident.

- Economically Spain is also more important than any other Mediterranean region. While mercury is the only mineral of which she produces an appreciable percentage of the world supply (43.2 per cent in 1925-29), the quality and location of her iron ore makes it of great value especially to England and Germany. In addition, Spain produces varying amounts of copper, lead, zinc, and other minerals. Between 1925 and 1929 she produced nearly half the world's olive oil and supplied half the world's export of citrus fruits. Although figures vary appreciably concerning the amount of foreign investments in Spain and the percentages held by different nationals, in 1937 estimates of the total ranged from \$418,000,000 to twice that sum, of which the combined share of France and Great Britain was put at 80 to 90 per cent, with credit for the greater proportion given to France by some, to England by others. Furthermore, much of the mining industry was in their hands. Italy, besides her general need of minerals and wool, had a special interest in Spain's mercury, for the combined Italian and Spanish output of about 85 per cent of the world's supply would enable them through cooperation to control the world market. Nazi Germany also had a particular reason for concern over Spain because her own shortage of foreign exchange compelled her to buy raw materials where she could pay for them with goods and services. Because Spain was relatively backward in industrial development, she offered Germany the same opportunity for barter that the Balkans did and, in addition, was richer in some minerals.

Moreover, the eyes of Soviet Russia were turned toward Spain, chiefly because of the latter's position in the game of power politics. Communist propagandists have been credited with responsibility for much of the Leftist agitation in Spain, but even though they were undoubtedly active there, they made little headway with the individualistic Spaniards, whose radicalism stemmed from Bakunin and Sorel rather than Marx, until the danger of a crushing defeat in the civil war compelled all radical groups to unite in self-defense. Nevertheless, since Spain had become by 1936 the principal battle-ground between Communism and Fascism, the Comintern and the Soviet Government



could not refrain from participation in the fray without losing face among Left-Wing elements all over the world. Even so, a much more realistic consideration for Russia was the problem of balance of power. Should the Nationalist forces win in alliance with Italy and Germany, Russia's ally, France, would be almost completely encircled and reduced to impotence, while Great Britain's position would be an extremely precarious one. Thus, Russia would be left alone to face Nazi Germany in the West and Japan in the Far East. Something of all this lay behind Litvinov's statement to the Eighth Congress of Soviets on November 28, 1936: 'In the case of Spain, we have the first sally of Fascism beyond its borders. Here is an attempt at a forcible implantation in Spain from without of a Fascist system. . . . If this attempt were to succeed there would be no guarantees against its repetition on a wider scale in relation to other States.'

Early in August 1936 it became clear that Italy and Germany were giving General Franco active assistance. This was the more significant because it was known that Mussolini had tried, at various times over the previous decade of Italian rivalry with France, to enlist Spain on his side. He was reported at one time to have secured the promise of the Balearics for use as a base in case of conflict with France. At another time he allegedly had offered to Rightist generals arms and financial aid when needed. Then, too, the forced landing of Italian airmen in French Morocco on July 30 revealed that they had been recruited for their mission to Franco on July 14, three days before the revolt occurred. The background of German intervention is more obscure, although the Loyalist Government reported the discovery at Barcelona of evidence proving that Nazi propaganda among Spanish sympathizers with Germany had been carried on for some time. There were also rumors that Gil Robles had agreed to permit Germany to use Spanish harbors as submarine bases; and that Juan March, financial backer of the revolution who had made a fortune through dealings with Germany during the World War, was especially intimate with German naval men. Furthermore, the visit to Berlin in February 1936 of General Sanjurjo whose death on July 20 prevented him from taking a leading part in the revolt, and of Primo de Rivera, son of the former dictator and leader of the Falangists, was certainly not unconnected with plots against the Spanish Government.

Whether Mussolini or Hitler was more responsible for taking the initiative in sending early aid to the Spanish rebels, of which

both have openly boasted, is an unanswered question. Both were equally interested in opposing the Popular Front Government because it would naturally lean toward France, especially after Blum became Premier, and thus tip the scales against Italy and Germany. Their opportunity to win an ally by aiding the rebels and to paralyze France and Great Britain by dividing conservatives and liberals over the cry of 'red menace' was too good to be neglected. Furthermore, the Spanish Civil War offered Hitler an opportunity both to train his new army and to test his newly developed arms.

While one would expect to find in England the same outburst of indignation at intervention in Spain that greeted Mussolini's Ethiopian ambitions, nothing of the kind occurred. If anything, the Conservatives and die-hard Tories should have been more alarmed than they had been over Ethiopia before, because despite some progress in mending fences in the eastern Mediterranean, England's imperial position was still admittedly so far from comfortable that a shift of Spain from neutrality toward friendship with Italy might make it unbearable. The Conservatives, however, were undoubtedly influenced by the fear of a 'Red' triumph in Spain. Equally important was their conviction that in the end, even if the Nationalists won with Italian and German aid, Spain would need the money for reconstruction which England alone of the Great Powers could lend. Hence it was argued that the Nationalists could not afford to alienate her. Furthermore, everybody in Great Britain had come to realize that she was woefully unprepared to take the risk of armed conflict. Labor, though sympathizing with the Loyalists, was still unwilling to take any risks of war. 'Those elements that recognized the underlying threat to democracy beneath the totalitarian camouflage of 'anti-Communism' were just as loath to venture onto the field of battle. 'It is not for the democracies to open an offensive against the Fascist Powers,' declared a writer in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*. 'To do so would be political madness and would bring back the era of religious wars. But it is for the democracies and, above all, France and Great Britain, upon whom all depends, to work together in deep sympathy and mutual understanding, and to be strong in the mutual defense of their soil, and their priceless heritage.'<sup>7</sup> In short, the majority of Englishmen still hoped that wars elsewhere would never come

<sup>7</sup> August 14, 1936, p. 122. Cf. Lord Lothian, 'World Crisis of 1936,' *Foreign Affairs*, XV (July 1936), 138.

home to them. They considered the war in Spain to be horrible and shocking, but not half so bad as a general European one which might result from intervention in other peoples' quarrels.

The same observations apply to France with some variations. The Right in France was not in power as the Conservatives were in England, but was even more outspokenly on the side of the Spanish Nationalists. It is curious that the group which had one day fought both German and Italian expansion tooth and nail now seemed willing to further it. The reason lay again partly in the fear and hatred of Communism which the triumph of the Popular Front in both France and Spain strengthened, partly in complaisance over the outcome in Spain, and partly in the growing conviction that Nazi Germany was intent upon expansion eastward. The Blum Government, obviously sympathetic with the Loyalists, was in a predicament. Conscious of French weakness, sincerely desiring peace, Blum still thought that Hitler and Mussolini were reasonable men with whom it would be possible to reach agreement. On June 23, he declared that France did not want a 'conditional peace, subordinated to political affinities or antagonisms,' but a peace 'for all peoples.' He explained that 'propaganda or struggle for or against such and such a political or social system ought not to be the pretext for war,' and pointed out that the parties united in the Popular Front had 'always fought for the Franco-German entente.' Besides, if Blum yielded to pressure from his Communist Party supporters and aided the Spanish Popular Front, he would risk splitting his Government and the country. Hess, Hitler's deputy leader of the National Socialist Party, had declared only three days after Blum took office that France was now virtually a Bolshevik country. To people like Marshal Pétain, who had written that by adopting closer relations with Moscow France had acknowledged Communism 'as an acceptable doctrine' and would probably 'regret it,'<sup>8</sup> Hess's conclusion had been amply verified by the strikes and disorders of June. In view of such an element in French public opinion and the great tasks of economic and social reconstruction to be done, Blum and his colleagues wanted by all means to avoid international conflict.

To both England and France, moreover, the Spanish Civil War seemed of less significance in July and August than other problems. Since the usual story of Spanish revolt was either

<sup>8</sup> *Le Journal*, April 30, 1936, quoted in *Bulletin of International News*, XII (1935-36), 843.

quick suppression or almost equally speedy overturn of one faction by another, no one expected this civil war to last very long. Therefore, it seemed reasonable to concentrate upon the task of conciliation which had been inaugurated with the end of sanctions against Italy and with the renewal in July of efforts to negotiate a new Locarno Accord. Delbos, Blum's Foreign Minister, hoped that he could succeed where his predecessors had failed in building a security system embracing not only Western Europe, but also the Danubian and Mediterranean regions as well. The acceptance by Germany and Italy on July 31 of the invitation to attend a Five-Power Locarno Conference sometime in the autumn seemed to prove that such hopes might not be vain even though the acceptance had been purchased by significant concessions to both Italy and Germany. The British and French Governments thus appeared to believe that if the Spanish war could be quarantined the result there might be a speedy victory for one side or at worst a stalemate; and accordingly peace in the rest of Europe might be maintained.

This was the idea behind the proposal for non-intervention issued to Italy and Great Britain by the French Government on August 1. Whether or not the British Government prompted this move is still a matter of dispute, although, if it is not true that they warned France against action beyond the Pyrenees, it is more than probable that Sir George Clerk, British Ambassador in Paris, presented his Government's views in favor of non-intervention 'informally' at the Quai d'Orsay.<sup>9</sup> Certainly, the British Government accepted the proposal in principle very promptly on August 4, but suggested that negotiations be extended to include all countries that might intervene in Spain. When France complied with this suggestion, Germany promptly announced that she saw no difficulty in the way of entering negotiations for drafting non-intervention rules if they were also applied to Soviet Russia. The latter in turn accepted on condition that Portugal, suspected of permitting arms for Franco to cross her territory, should participate, and that assistance then being given to the rebels 'by certain states' should cease immediately. It should be noted that while the Soviet Government was not as yet openly taking sides, workers were being solicited throughout the Union to contribute a small part of their monthly

<sup>9</sup> Cf. V. M. Dean, 'European Diplomacy in the Spanish Crisis,' *Foreign Policy Reports*, XII (Dec. 1, 1936), 223; Alvarez del Vayo, *Freedom's Battle*, pp. 66-68; and *Survey of International Affairs, 1937*, II, 147, n. 1.

wages to a Spanish Loyalist fund. Finally, on August 6, Italy agreed to the proposal in principle, but raised questions concerning propaganda, the action of private individuals, and methods of insuring observance of non-intervention pledges.

On the strength of these and other replies, the French drafted an accord which proposed to ban all war material to Spain and to exchange information among the signatories concerning measures taken in fulfillment of the non-intervention pledge. As might be expected, the Loyalist Government protested this policy and also the French ban upon exports of arms. While admitting that a policy of non-intervention might check hostilities beyond the borders of Spain, and agreeing to collaborate in any prompt and effective measures, the Loyalists declared that the French action constituted a serious intervention policy by all Powers. What made the situation worse was the delay of Italy, Germany, and Portugal, who for one reason or another put off accepting the French draft while tension on all sides mounted.

In an effort to revive the bogging attempts at non-intervention, France and Great Britain on August 15 exchanged declarations putting on record their decision to 'abstain rigorously from all intervention, direct or indirect,' in Spanish internal affairs, and their intention to prohibit the shipment to Spain and its possessions of arms and munitions as well as all airplanes and warships. This prohibition was to include all contracts in process of execution. Also the two Powers promised to exchange information with all others who adhered to the agreement. But these measures were to go into effect only after the adherence of Germany, Italy, the U.S.S.R., and Portugal. While France had already taken steps toward fulfillment of these intentions, Great Britain demonstrated her good faith by putting an armaments embargo into effect beginning on August 19.

Again there was a delay of several days before the Great Powers responded to renewed pressure from France and England. Germany was carrying on a dispute with the Loyalist Government over the seizure of six Lufthansa planes and the detention of a German ship, the *Kamerun*. Italy still wanted something done to stop propaganda and the raising of funds within each country. But at last, August 26, with the adherence of Germany, Italy, and the U.S.S.R. to the non-intervention policy, as well as that of twenty-two smaller countries, France issued an invitation for the formation of an international committee to supervise the application of the agreement and to discuss new points that

might arise. After further difficulties raised by Germany and Portugal, representatives from all adherents to the non-intervention proposal met at London on September 9 and formed a Committee on Non-Intervention.

\* This organization, which did little at the first meeting except call for reports from each Government concerning the legislative and other steps already taken to put into effect the non-intervention accord, did not mean that all the twenty-seven countries represented had made exactly the same promises. Some fifteen countries, including the Soviet Union, repeated the preamble and the basic declarations of the French-British notes of August 15. Six states including Germany and Italy omitted the preamble and were thus not pledged to refrain from all interference, but only from the shipment of arms and war material. They were, in so far as their declarations were concerned, free to send volunteers or to give such other forms of assistance as financial aid.<sup>10</sup> Since some of the Powers who were represented on the Non-Intervention Committee had no intention of living up to the agreement, the variations in the form of adherence have little significance except to indicate that even in declaration of intention the friends of the Loyalists were willing to go farther in denying aid than were the friends of the Nationalists. Considering that among the latter were totalitarian states that had already proved their utter lack of scruple in breaking international treaties, it is no wonder that almost from the beginning any hope that the agreements would really stop intervention in Spain was blasted. The only official excuse that France and Great Britain ever offered for continuing to support the palpable farce of non-intervention was that it was preserving the peace of Europe. Nothing could better emphasize the complete lack of any sense of integrity among all the Powers, including 'the democracies,' who connived at trickery, thinking to save their own skins, nor more clearly indicate the bankruptcy of statesmanship than the fact that persuading Germany and the U.S.S.R. to sit down in the same committee, where they could hurl charges at one another according to agreed-upon rules, was regarded as a great boon to the cause of peace.

Under the circumstances Loyalist Spain felt most aggrieved by the outcome of the French effort to secure non-intervention. Rebuffed by the Committee and put off by the League of Na-

<sup>10</sup> See N. J. Padelford, *International Law and Diplomacy in the Spanish Civil Strife* (1939), p. 58.

tions, before whom Alvarez del Vayo, Loyalist Foreign Minister, had attempted to present the case against Italy, Germany, and Portugal for aiding the Nationalists, the Loyalist Government, on September 30, published a White Book setting forth evidence supporting its charges against the three nations. Since, according to the rules adopted at the fourth meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee on September 28, only members could submit charges, the Loyalists needed an advocate if their case was to be heard. The U.S.S.R. consequently stepped forth in this rôle on October 6 and 7, when, in notes to Lord Plymouth who was acting as chairman, her representative not only singled out Portugal for attack and expressed the fear that the non-intervention agreement was 'virtually non-existent,' but also threatened to withdraw from the Committee if violations of the accord did not cease. This brought excitement to a high pitch. What could be done, if Russia meant what she said, to prevent a European war from breaking out after all?

The Committee met, heard categorical denials of the charges, listened to violent counter-accusations of Soviet aid to the Loyalists, recessed, declined to meet to consider a Russian suggestion that Portuguese ports be blockaded and her frontier with Spain watched, but at length did reassemble on October 23, more than two weeks after the Russian allegations had been first presented. In view of the Soviet notes, evidences of her active support of the Loyalist Government, and a message of encouragement on October 15 from Joseph Stalin to the Central Committee of the Spanish Communist Party, it was feared that the U.S.S.R. would make good its threat to withdraw. French pressure at Moscow undoubtedly helped to prevent such a break with the Committee, but did not deter Maisky, Soviet Ambassador in London, from proposing that, in view of the 'unfair situation,' the Spanish Government be permitted to buy arms from anyone desiring to sell them. Likewise, he declared that the Soviet Union could not consider itself bound by the non-intervention agreement 'to any greater extent than the remaining participants in this agreement.' Since the U.S.S.R. was sending food and munitions to the Loyalists by this time, this declaration may well have been made not only to serve as an excuse for its own actions, but as a bit of face-saving after failing to make good the threat to resign from the Committee.

While this round of charges, countercharges, 'careful investigations,' 'satisfactory' explanations, and acquittals went on in

the Non-Intervention Committee, events were rapidly changing even the theoretical basis of neutrality toward the two contending parties in Spain. On October 23, Portugal, who had for weeks professed to be afraid of a 'Communist' attack, broke off diplomatic relations with the Loyalist Government. On October 25, Italy and Germany recognized 'the fact that the National Government of General Franco' was 'supported by the firm will of the Spanish population in the larger part of the national area.'<sup>11</sup> On October 28, Maisky again plainly warned the Powers that Russia would continue to supply the Loyalists as long as she believed that others were aiding the Nationalists. At length, on November 18, Italy and Germany formally recognized Franco's administration as the legitimate Spanish Government. All this threw those striving to maintain peace into another panic lest a collision between the Fascist Powers and Soviet Russia result from their obvious determination to continue supporting the opposing forces in Spain. This led to the serious discussion of the Russian proposal to supervise the Spanish frontier and ports; also to a consideration of how to control 'volunteers.' But, as usual, dilatory tactics prevented action for some time.

Thus, despite the work of pacification and revision in the Mediterranean begun in 1936 by both England and France, the Spanish imbroglio prevented complete success. The 'little world war' on the Iberian peninsula, which dragged along until 1939, increased international tension and divided the forces of the Western Powers by keeping constantly before them a Mediterranean danger zone in addition to the Central and East European one. The consummation of the Rome-Berlin Axis in October 1936 increased the seriousness of the existing double-headed threat to Great Britain, France, and Russia, while the cooperation of Germany and Japan, envisaged in the Anti-Comintern Pact of November 1936, created another means of dissipating the energies and thereby weakening the resistance of the democracies and the Soviet Union.

<sup>11</sup> Statement by Count Ciano, *Documents on International Affairs, 1936*, p. 342.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

# IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICT AND APPEASEMENT, 1936-37

LONG before the end of 1936 it had become clear that Spain was but one rallying point for the ideological conflict between Communism, ostensibly allied with democracy, and Fascism in its various forms. While this battle was very real between 1936 and 1939 and was fought out with all the zeal and fanaticism of the religious wars of the Reformation on a hundred fronts from council chambers, press, and radio to the smoking cities and arid plateaus of Spain, it was to a very considerable extent a smoke-screen laid down and constantly maintained by Nazi Germany in order to confound her opponents and to hide Hitler's real objectives.

### *1. Anti-Communism — Smoke-Screen for Nazi Expansion*

Although the Nazi attack of 1935 upon Communism had died down in the first part of 1936, it gathered force again in June and reached its height at the Nuremberg party rally of 'Honor,' September 9-14, when Hitler, Goebbels, and Rosenberg screamed out their denunciation of Bolshevism as a disintegrating force in all Europe. What made the attacks more significant was Hitler's coupling of statements concerning Germany's lack of colonies and natural resources with his reported declaration that 'If I had the Ural Mountains with their incalculable store of treasures in raw materials, Siberia with its vast forests, and the Ukraine with its tremendous wheat fields, Germany under National Socialist leadership could swim in plenty.'<sup>1</sup> Everyone jumped to the conclusion that Hitler, whose anti-Communism had been one of his most consistently held views, intended to

<sup>1</sup> The official text toned down this statement, as reported by journalists, to make Hitler's words an innocuous exposition of German efficiency despite lack of advantages enjoyed by such a rich nation as Soviet Russia. See *Documents on International Affairs, 1936*, p. 294.

seek the *Lebensraum* that was now demanded as a German necessity at the expense of the Soviet Union.

Undoubtedly this impression was what Hitler intended to convey in order to disarm opposition among the democratic and neighboring Powers to Germany's political and economic expansion. Yet a careful examination of the speeches at Nuremberg and elsewhere in the summer and autumn of 1936 indicates that Hitler and his colleagues were quite as anti-democratic as they were anti-Bolshevist. The increasing references to the loss of colonies and Hitler's declaration that Germany would never 'relinquish her demand for a solution of her colonial claims,' heartily seconded in numerous statements by Dr. Schacht, were intended to embarrass France and Great Britain. Besides, Hitler castigated democracy at Nuremberg as 'the channel through which Bolshevism lets its poison flow into each country.' Furthermore, either because of the *Reichswehr's* desire to continue the former collaboration with the Red Army, or the economists' appreciation of the advantages in trading with the U.S.S.R., the careful distinction, mentioned by Hitler on March 7, 1936, between Communist ideology and the Soviet Government was maintained. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* remarked, September 19, with reference to the fear of a German-Russian conflict that it must be clear to all 'that at Nuremberg a war of ideology was preached against Bolshevism, and not at all a war against the Soviet Union.'<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, this campaign against Bolshevism and democracy, and the discourses on Germany's economic progress and her need for colonies and raw materials were partly designed for home consumption. Despite Dr. Schacht's reduction of the German debts, his barter trading, and the prospects of friendlier commercial relations with Great Britain and France, German economy was still far from satisfactory. Moreover, although employment had increased, real wages had decreased; and there was much grumbling among labor groups against the Nazi régime. Also the National Socialist hold upon the Government itself, where such non-Nazis as Schacht, von Neurath, and Blomberg still held high office, was far from complete. Finally, since the Treaty of Versailles was virtually dead, and such remaining evidences of German 'servitude' as the clauses concerning international control of German rivers were soon to be abrogated on November 14, Hitler needed a substitute with which to justify

<sup>2</sup> As quoted in the *Bulletin of International News*, XIII (1936-37), 277.

both Nazi leadership and new demands for still further sacrifices by the German people in order to build up the German military machine. Thus, on August 24, Hitler offered as an excuse for raising the term of military training from one to two years, the fact that Soviet Russia had increased her forces by lowering the conscription age limit to nineteen on August 11. Likewise, with the demands for colonies and the castigation of the democracies constituting an excellent introduction, the National Socialists announced at Nuremberg their new four-year plan for the achievement of autarchy which was decreed on October 18, 1936, when Goering, given supreme direction over its operation, became the first Nazi to take command of German economy.

Although Hitler had succeeded in convincing his foes that he would eventually attack Russia, he was less successful in hiding the fact that he would not spare them in his drive for *Lebensraum*. While he and his spiritual allies, Mosley in England, Degrelle and his Rexists in Belgium, the Iron Cross in Rumania, and the varicolored Shirts scattered in other countries throughout Europe had accomplished much in 1936, they overplayed their hand; for the realization that beneath the anti-Bolshevik campaign Hitler was attempting to keep Europe divided, to break the few remaining vestiges of collective security such as the Anglo-French Entente, the Franco-Czechoslovak-Soviet Pacts, and the Little Entente, and to develop a totalitarian Central European bloc helped to prevent them from achieving complete success. Furthermore, though his opponents, especially France and Great Britain, managed their foreign policies badly, they were not so gullible that they failed to see that Hitler's nationalistic goals would be eventually attained only at the expense of other countries.

On the diplomatic chessboard Hitler seemed to be making some headway in Central and Southeastern Europe during the latter part of 1936. Hungary's leaning toward Germany, indicated by the policy of Premier Goemboes in 1935, was further accentuated by a visit of Regent Horthy with Hitler at Berchtesgaden in August 1936 and of von Neurath to Budapest on September 21. A reorganization of the Bulgarian Government in July strengthened the aggressive Fascist movement there. In Greece, General Metaxas, who made himself dictator in August 1936, was courted by Schacht in June and by Goebbels in September. In Rumania, the pro-French Foreign Minister Titulescu, who had effected a rapprochement with Russia and was reported

to have agreed in July to the building of a strategic railway across Rumanian territory which would connect Russia and Czechoslovakia, was suddenly dropped from the Cabinet on August 29. At the meeting of the Little Entente in Bratislava, September 13-14, Rumania and Jugoslavia, while they agreed to reaffirm the loyalty of the Little Entente to the League and to support its refusal to join a common front against Soviet Russia, nevertheless decided against closer relations with her and secured Czechoslovakia's acquiescence in recognition of the right of each state to carry on negotiations with neighboring countries in accordance with its own best interests. This last decision constituted a dangerous threat to the unity of the Little Entente as envisaged in the 1933 pact of organization.

The slackening of Little Entente solidarity over every question except that of Hapsburg restoration, against which they were all still united, was particularly alarming for Czechoslovakia, where the menace of Nazi aggression was so real in the summer and autumn of 1936 that talk arose of her becoming a second Spain. Ever since the signature of the Czechoslovak-Soviet pact of mutual assistance in May 1935, the German press had accused Prague of permitting itself to become the spearhead of a Soviet drive into the heart of Europe. Despite repeated official Czechoslovak denials, the Germans seized upon every incident, such as the visit of a Soviet air mission to Prague in July 1936, to charge that the Government had actually turned over Czechoslovak bases to the air forces of the U.S.S.R. It was rumored and generally believed that in the autumn of 1936 Hitler discussed a project for the partition of Czechoslovakia among Germany, Poland, Austria, and Hungary, each of whose fellow nationals within the republic would furnish the excuse for action. While elements in all the countries were undoubtedly in favor of such a scheme, Austria with the support of Mussolini was credited with scotching it.<sup>3</sup> In the face of the menacing attitude of Germany and of the Sudeten German minority within the country, Czechoslovakia passed a huge defense bill in May and attempted to placate the minority by making some concessions concerning language and public employment. In her foreign relations, she adhered to both her French and Soviet friends, made a brave show of close accord with Rumania when King Carol came to

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Martin Fuchs, *Showdown in Vienna* (New York, 1939), pp. 99-101; Richard Freund, *Watch Czechoslovakia* (New York, 1937), pp. 7-9; and G. E. R. Gedye, 'Calling the Fascist Bluff,' *Current History*, XLVI (April, 1937), 53-59.

Prague at the end of October, and remained on excellent terms with Austria. Failure to improve her relations with Poland, because of the Polish minority in Teschen and Prague's pro-Soviet alignment, was the only weakness in Czechoslovakia's otherwise strong position that enabled her in 1936 to prevent the dreaded German attack.

Poland, meanwhile, who had been slated by Goemboes in May 1935 for membership in a Central European bloc and who was always named by the Soviet press and by the prosecution in the Soviet treason trials of 1936-38 along with Germany and Japan as an active enemy of the Soviet Union, veered away from the Nazi orbit toward renewed cordiality with France. The outward symbols of this turn were the exchange of visits between notables of the two countries and the grant of a loan by France to Poland for purposes of developing her armaments and strategic communications. Some commentators attributed the change in Polish policy to an eclipse of Beck by Smigly-Rydz whose title of Marshal and virtual recognition as head of the Government by a series of parliamentary acts in 1936 definitely established him as Pilsudski's successor. But Beck himself visited Paris in October and also London, November 8-11, where he was credited with being in perfect accord with Anglo-French policies. Poland was not, as a matter of fact, cutting herself entirely loose from the German connection. She was still the friend of Germany, but the ally of France.

German policy, especially its development with respect to Danzig, was more important than any other factor in determining the Polish stand in 1936. The Austro-German agreement of July had caused Poland to fear that the Nazis would now be free to turn their attention to the Baltic where Poland's interests were more directly concerned. While there was a good deal of Nazi activity among German minorities in all the Baltic states, Poland became most alarmed over the situation in Danzig, where the obvious determination of the Nazi Party to crush all opposition and 'coordinate' the city government led to a crisis in July between the Free City's Nazi administration and the League of Nations High Commissioner, who conceived it to be his duty to see that the Danzig Constitution was not violated. The League Council virtually turned the matter over to Poland, a step which meant the abdication of the League from its position as guarantor of Danzig's status, but which was logical in so far as the peace settlement concerning that city had been made in order to assure

Poland's access to the sea. Despite the development of another port at Gdynia, Poland still needed Danzig. At the same time, the latter depended largely upon Polish trade for its livelihood. Since the elements of a bargain existed, the two came to terms after a crisis in October and November, in which Germany threatened Poland with serious consequences if anti-German press polemics and other demonstrations were not suppressed, and Poland indicated that under no circumstances would she permit the Nazis, now in complete control of Danzig, to jeopardize her interests there. The results of the agreement, communicated to the League in January 1937, were the preservation of the *status quo* in Danzig with regard to relations between that city and Poland, but the reduction of the League High Commissioner's position to that of a figurehead. From Hitler's point of view, then, Poland's relations with France and England and her vigorous stand regarding her rights in Danzig were an unexpected check to his ambitions, even though Poland and Czechoslovakia were still unable to cooperate against the common German menace.

## *2. Belgian Neutrality, 1936-37*

Turning to Western Europe, the diplomatic honors at the end of 1936 were also fairly even. Here the key to the situation, aside from the issue of Spain, was the question of a new Locarno Pact whose ghost haunted the scene long after any real hope of successful negotiations had gone. The three Locarno Powers — France, England, and Belgium — probably upon French insistence, had declared on July 23 in their invitation to Germany and Italy to attend a five-Power conference, that they envisaged a wider discussion eventually than that of the problem of security in Western Europe and hoped for the 'collaboration of other interested Powers,' meaning thereby Poland, the Little Entente, and the U.S.S.R. Since this raised the horrific shades of bygone collective security pacts and Barthou proposals, Hitler was determined to prevent the dragging of any Eastern Powers, especially Russia, into such a parley. At the same time, Mussolini, though he was not so outspokenly anti-Russian, reverted to his favorite scheme of a Four-Power Pact which, in effect, meant the exclusion of the Soviet Union. Consequently, although both Italy and Germany on July 31 accepted in principle the invitations to a Locarno Conference, they made it clearer and clearer

as time went on that they would not enter a conference until Great Britain and France agreed to keep Eastern Europe out of the discussion. In fact, the German press hinted that France had better drop the Soviet Mutual-Assistance Pact if she wanted a Western European security agreement, and Schacht, when he visited Paris at the end of August, was reported to have suggested the same thing. While France had refused to implement the Soviet Pact by staff talks, she also refused to terminate it — an attitude undoubtedly strengthened by the Soviet's display of firmness in the Non-Intervention Committee during October.

The worst blow to Anglo-French hopes was struck by Belgium, however, on October 14, when King Leopold advised the Cabinet to pursue a policy of self-defense and independence. This declaration was immediately hailed as a return to neutrality, but that soon proved to be an incorrect interpretation. A return to neutrality was impossible because the necessary condition for such a status — a fairly even balance of power among the Great Powers — had passed, and because the renewal of mutual guarantees of security did not seem feasible. Three factors had influenced Belgium to seek a change in her international position. First of all, since the breakdown of the League had caused her, along with the other small states of Europe, to fear that the collective security system built up around it would now bring greater risks of war than assurances of safety, her statesmen began to hope that a show of determination not to take sides in the developing European blocs would win respect and non-interference from the Great Powers. In the second place, Belgium in 1936 was experiencing an internal political crisis similar to that which had developed in France. Degrelle's Fascistic Rexistes on the Right, with undoubted encouragement if not financial aid from Berlin, were not only drawing into their orbit those political elements, such as the Flemish Nationalists and Catholics, which disliked France and its Popular Front Government, but were also gaining followers as a result of the social and economic unrest which became evident when a wave of strikes swept over Belgian industry in the summer of 1936. Although Premier van Zeeland's Government, struggling since March 1935 with the economic and financial problems not unlike those in France, had made considerable progress with the backing of Socialist and Liberal Parties who had avoided the creation of a popular front, including the Communists, the government coalition by the autumn of 1936 was tending to split over the question of

defense, with the result that a new departure in foreign policy seemed necessary in order to rally support behind the proposed armament appropriations.

The third factor determining the newly announced foreign policy of Belgium was the remilitarization of the Rhineland with its revelation of German strength and British and French weakness. In May 1935, van Zeeland had carefully pointed out for the benefit of both Germany and the political parties at home that since Belgium was not a party to the Franco-Soviet Pact, that instrument did not extend or modify Belgian engagements. On March 6, 1936, on the eve of the German march into the Rhineland, he and the French Ambassador exchanged letters which modified the Franco-Belgian military agreement of 1920 so as to leave no ambiguity concerning the character of the general staff contacts which were to be continued solely with reference to obligations under the Locarno Pact. Throughout 1935 van Zeeland had tried to steer a middle-of-the-road course between the two ideological groups, establishing diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia in July 1935 and entertaining Ribbentrop in September. With the German repudiation of Locarno, however, Belgium had entered with Great Britain and France into the mutual guarantee agreement of March 19, 1936, and had participated in the staff talks in April and in the Three-Power Locarno Conference at London in July. Nevertheless, throughout the summer of 1936 there were increasing signs, even among liberal backers of van Zeeland, that in view of the changes wrought by the Rhineland coup Belgium wanted a conciliatory policy toward Germany. The Right, naturally more vehement, raised the cry, 'no more a satellite of France.'

Such tendencies as these caused the feeling that King Leopold's declaration of a 'Belgian' foreign policy really meant a pro-German policy. Berlin was quietly pleased, Paris was dismayed, but London took the matter philosophically. As a result of private and public explanations by Foreign Minister Spaak, however, it soon became apparent that Belgium intended to remain loyal to the League, but did not want to become a battle-ground in case League sanctions should be applied against Germany. In this she was but reflecting the attitude of all of Germany's smaller neighbors, who were afraid that they might become involved in Great Power conflicts if the clause in Article XVI of the Covenant, providing for the transit of troops across a League member's territory in case of military sanctions, remained



operative.<sup>4</sup> But in contrast to the attitude of the other small Powers, Belgium would welcome guarantees of her independence and territorial integrity, according to Spaak, although she would not assume obligations toward others by continuing the tripartite accord of March or by joining a new Western Pact. Nevertheless, Great Britain in November and France in December reiterated their promise to give aid to Belgium in case she were attacked. The question was not entirely cleared up, however, until 1937, when, on April 24, France and Great Britain released Belgium from all obligations, but promised assistance in case of unprovoked aggression; and on October 13, the German Government promised to respect Belgian neutrality. While the first two Powers made their assurances conditional on evidence of Belgium's determination to defend herself, Germany made hers dependent upon Belgium's refraining from any military action against her.

To return to 1936, on the morrow of King Leopold's October declaration a German note was delivered in London which offered the negotiation of a Four-Power Pact, with a guarantee of Belgian and Dutch integrity by France, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy, each of whom was to decide in the event of conflict whether or not an act of aggression requiring assistance to the victim had been committed. In addition, the note reiterated Hitler's refusal to link the proposed pact in any way with the security of Eastern Europe, thus leaving him free, as far as his obligations to Western Powers were concerned, to pursue his objectives in the East which his Nuremberg speech seemed to foreshadow. On October 26, von Ribbentrop, appointed Ambassador to England on August 11, arrived in London and announced as he stepped from the train that, in view of the Communist danger to Europe 'and to the British Empire as well,' a close collaboration between Germany and Great Britain was 'a vital necessity in the common struggle for the upholding of our civilization and culture.' This bid for British support of Germany's anti-Communist crusade merely underlined what everyone knew to be Hitler's aims when he made his Four-Power Pact proposals, while its implication that Great Britain needed German aid against Communism disgusted more Englishmen than it pleased. Meanwhile, Hitler had been more successful in his relations with Italy, the fourth Locarno Power.

<sup>4</sup> See Spaak's statement of April 29, 1937, in *Documents on International Affairs, 1936*, pp. 240-48; and that of Foreign Minister de Graeff of the Netherlands, March 1937, in *ibid.*, 1937, p. 349.

### 3. The Rome-Berlin Axis Created

Mussolini's policy had been full of ambiguities ever since May. For example, in that month he had told an English journalist that with the end of sanctions Italy would enter the ranks of the 'satisfied' and therefore conservative Powers, and that he had no designs on Egypt, all of which seemed to indicate a desire for reconciliation with Great Britain. Yet in June he had sanctioned the Austro-German Treaty and the lively and cordial exchange of visits between German and Italian officials; moreover, in July he began actively aiding Franco. On the other hand, he seemed less anti-Bolshevik than Hitler and more interested in the proposals for a Locarno Conference, not at first agreeing with Berlin in the desire to limit its scope to Western Europe. Still, throughout the summer and autumn the outward show of close political and cultural community of interests between Italy and Germany was maintained by a continual stream of visitors. The climax of these activities was reached with the visit of Count Ciano to Berchtesgaden and Berlin, October 22-25, the results of which Mussolini himself on November 1 described as the establishment between Italy and Germany of 'an axis around which all European States animated by a desire for peace may collaborate on troubles.'

The truth of the matter is that Mussolini undoubtedly in 1936, as in 1933, preferred a Four-Power combination within which Italy might hope to gain what she wanted by balancing with England between France and Germany. Since Britain and France had refused to enter such a group, Mussolini allowed himself to be pulled into a partnership with Hitler that was later described by a Paris journalist as a *mariage de convenance*, 'official love and separate rooms.' Mussolini's son-in-law, Foreign Minister Ciano, has been credited with a sincere conviction of the intrinsic worth of the Rome-Berlin Axis, but there is little doubt that for Mussolini it constituted a means by which he hoped to bluff Great Britain and France into recognizing Italian conquests and granting further economic and perhaps territorial concessions in the Mediterranean area.

There were, of course, many points at which Italian and German interests coincided. Both disliked the Montreux Convention concerning the Straits; both wanted to see Franco win in Spain; both had little love for the League, although Italy was still a member; both were anti-Bolshevik, though Mussolini less bla-

tantly than Hitler; and both were anti-democratic. On the other hand, at many points their interests might readily conflict unless a bargain could eliminate friction. That was notably true in Austria and the Balkans, and only a little less so in Spain. In 1936, however, the inequality in strength of the two partners was not so heavily in favor of Germany that Mussolini need fear being outdone by his ally.

The first fruit of that 'atmosphere of friendly cordiality' which marked Ciano's stay in Germany was Hitler's recognition on October 24 of the conquest of Ethiopia in return for which he hoped to share in its economic exploitation. Ciano, in a statement of October 25, listed the other subjects of agreement: A 'desire to collaborate' in a Western European security pact; 'friendly collaboration' in the Danubian area on the basis of the Rome Protocols and the Austro-German Treaty; recognition by the two Powers that Franco's Government was receiving the support of a majority of the Spanish people and affirmation of the fact that Italy and Germany had 'no other wish' than that Spain should soon resume 'with absolute national and colonial integrity' her place among the nations; the determination 'to defend with all energy the sacred inheritance of European civilization in its great institutions based on family and nation'; and finally the maintenance of 'cordial contacts' between the two Governments.

German comment upon the results of Ciano's visit emphasized the significance of the alignment against Communism, and the inevitable disruption of the Little Entente. The Italians, who received the news of the agreement cordially but without enthusiasm, talked of the resultant blow to France and the consequent formation of an Italo-German-Austro-Hungarian bloc of 130,000,000 peoples. Great Britain and France noted the partiality toward the Spanish Nationalists, but were encouraged enough by the phrase concerning the 'national and colonial integrity' of Spain to believe that Italy and Germany were not going to take any Spanish territory. Furthermore, the British persisted in thinking that Mussolini would still prefer reconciliation with them to an alliance with Hitler. Meanwhile, journalists and American commentators jumped to the conclusion that Italy and Germany had divided Central Europe into spheres of influence.

This last conjecture seemed to be verified by subsequent Italian policy which was proclaimed by Mussolini at Milan on

November 1 in a characteristic speech compounded of bluster and pacific intentions. Since disarmament, collective security, and indivisible peace were 'illusions,' Il Duce declared that the League of Nations, which had attempted to give them substance, could 'perish in peace.' Justice for Hungary, an independent Austria at peace with Germany, possible Italian friendship with Yugoslavia, cordial relations with Germany, especially in the anti-Bolshevist campaign, and understanding with Great Britain over the Mediterranean were the other high points of the exposition, the keynote of which seemed well expressed in the phrases: 'Peace with all, with those near and afar. Armed peace!' While the references to Hungary and Yugoslavia suggested that they were to fall into Italy's orbit, the remarks about Austria were ambiguous.

As a matter of fact, Mussolini's friendship with Germany ran counter to all his efforts for several years to create a Central European bloc dependent upon Italy. Though Count Ciano signed a new trade treaty with Austria on November 7, the recently forged link with Germany prevented him at the Vienna meeting of the Rome Protocol states, November 11-12, from supporting the project of collaborating with the Little Entente. Nevertheless, since both Austria and Hungary were given the right to develop economic relations with neighboring states through bilateral arrangements, Mussolini seemed to favor a Danubian bloc if it could be organized without making it appear to be an anti-German combination with Italian backing. Moreover, he tried to retain close relations with Hungary by recognizing her right to rearm, by sending Ciano to Budapest, and by giving Horthy a royal welcome in Italy at the end of November. In return for these evidences of Italy's continued interest in their welfare, Austria and Hungary duly rewarded the Duce by recognizing the conquest of Ethiopia, though they failed to join in the anti-Communist crusade. All of this rather farcical show of preserving the Rome Protocol Bloc, when considered in the light of an Italo-German trade agreement, announced on December 13, which divided Danubian exports between Italian and German railways and ports, indicated that the 'collaboration' of the Axis Powers in Central Europe meant a retreat for Italy from her previous position. No doubt the Mediterranean area seemed sufficiently wide to Mussolini and his British opponents there obligingly soft.

Hitler, in the meantime, did not rest content with his achieve-

ment of close association with Mussolini, even though that probably would mean Italian acquiescence in his eventual absorption of Austria and Czechoslovakia. One month after Ciano had left Berlin, the formation of a German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact was announced. This disclosure of November 25 came as no surprise, however. Rumors concerning German-Japanese cooperation had occasionally cropped up ever since Germany had followed Japan in withdrawing from the League of Nations. The Soviet press had persistently declared since January 1936 that there existed a military alliance designed to compel the U.S.S.R. to fight on two fronts. Berlin just as persistently had denied right up to November 21 that there was any kind of pact with Tokyo. The terms of the agreement, which were disclosed four days later, amounted to nothing more than an arrangement for combating the work of the Communist International by exchange of information, common action, and efforts to win the adherence of third parties.

This curious and relatively innocuous document was regarded by Russia as a blind for a more important compact believed to be a pledge of consultation and collaboration in all matters relating to the Soviet Union and China. Rumors that there was an agreement between the Reich and Japan for partitioning the Pacific area caused other Powers to take the matter only a little less seriously even though the published pact seemed, as one English journalist put it, 'a masterpiece of bluff.'<sup>5</sup> Of course both Japan and Germany hastened to assure the world that there were no secret agreements. Whatever the truth of the matter, the Anti-Comintern Pact missed fire in 1936. The Japanese press was not enthusiastic about the agreement. Mussolini, though he recognized Manchoukuo on November 28, was obviously not interested in joining the Berlin-Tokyo combination. Soviet Russia dropped current negotiations with Japan over their fisheries dispute and warned both Powers that aggression would be resisted. Great Britain cooled perceptibly toward Hitler's advances, and along with Poland, France, and Belgium indicated a renewed determination not to be drawn into the Nazi-inspired ideological conflict. Thus, the Anti-Comintern Pact remained for the time being nothing more than an ominous portent of the future.

<sup>5</sup> *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, November 27, 1936, p. 422.

*4. Birth of Appeasement Policy*

As the year 1936 drew to a close that future seemed obscure, particularly for Great Britain and France, from whom the initiative in the diplomatic war, which opened in earnest with the German occupation of the Rhineland, had long since passed to Germany and Italy. On the one hand, they were admonished to join with those two Powers to create a united front for 'European civilization' against Bolshevism; on the other, they were constantly warned by Moscow, the Communists, and not a few liberals everywhere that unless they united with Soviet Russia in defense of democracy they would be lost. The tactics of both sides in the Spanish Civil War revealed that old-fashioned concepts of neutrality were now gone. As the Spanish Foreign Minister Alvarez del Vayo pointed out at the League Council meeting in December, it was 'becoming more and more difficult to draw a clear line between what is the internal affair of a nation and what may be regarded as a matter of international concern.'

It was indeed true that the 'war of ideas' had overleaped boundaries and drawn the battle lines between individuals and groups regardless of nationalities. Yet despite the 'either, or' presentation of the situation, the British and French Governments were justified in attempting to evade the apparent dilemma and to insist that democracy was something different from either of the contending forces. For, however convincing the fulminations of Hitler and Mussolini on the one side and those of the Communists on the other, there was a fundamental similarity between them which separated them all from democracy. Hitler and Mussolini were using many of the same tactics both at home and abroad that had first been tried by the Bolsheviks and the Comintern. They were, moreover, just as successful as the Communists at building a system of controlled economy and spreading propaganda. Even the adventure in Spain turned out to be a greater triumph for the Fascintern than any of which the Comintern could boast. While Communism and Fascism were theoretically dissimilar, since the one was the product of nineteenth-century rational humanitarianism and the other of emotional brutalitarianism, the actual internal policy of Stalin was likewise bringing them ever closer together in practice. At the time that he was 'democratizing' the Soviet Constitution in 1936 and the Comintern was supporting democracy abroad, the Soviet

dictator was establishing by means of the trials and purges, which continued well into 1938, a totalitarian régime based upon despotic, personal rule that was the equal of Hitler's in everything but efficiency. Whatever justification Stalin may have had for shooting his former comrades — whether to maintain personal power, or to suppress actual plots against the Soviet — his methods inevitably made him more akin to Hitler and Mussolini than to the statesmen of France and England, however conservative and self-seeking they might be.

Those in the non-totalitarian countries who tried to keep cool heads declared: 'A plague o' both your blouses,' as A. P. Herbert once remarked; and recognized in the Communist-Fascist controversy a struggle for power. In that they were right. Stalin on his side was scared by the rapid rise of Germany, the steadily declining power of the Western democracies, and the simultaneous threat from Japanese expansion in the Far East. He wanted above everything else to avoid becoming involved in war and realized that weakness would invite attack. But in attempting to guarantee peace for the Soviet Union, he always had before him the alternatives of making terms with one or more of his opponents or of trying to create a coalition against them. By 1936, membership in the League of Nations was no longer of much value. There remained the pacts with France and Czechoslovakia and the possibility, after the German march into the Rhineland and the Italian threat to the *status quo* in the Mediterranean, that Great Britain might join a Franco-Russian system despite her century-long antagonism toward Russia and her even longer dislike of entanglements on the Continent.<sup>6</sup>

There were several factors, however, which prevented the strengthening of such a front against Germany, Italy, and Japan. For one thing, although France and Great Britain were correct in refusing to take sides between Communism and Fascism, they were stupid in not attempting to make the most of Soviet aid in opposing Fascist aggression. The Fascists were constantly distinguishing between Communism and the U.S.S.R., and the democracies should have followed their example. Also of great

<sup>6</sup> While T. A. Taracouzio, *War and Peace in Soviet Diplomacy* (New York, 1940), has admirably analyzed Communist theory, his application of it to the situation in 1936 as the valid explanation for Soviet Russia's policy is too doctrinaire. On the other hand, W. G. Krivitsky, *In Stalin's Secret Service* (New York, 1939), Ch. 3, errs on the other side in describing Stalin's desire for a pact with Hitler as the sole explanation of his policy. It would seem to be nearer the truth to credit Stalin with attempting a 'realistic' line of action in face of Nazi and Japanese threats.

importance was the military weakness of France and Great Britain and their slowness in rearmament caused in part by the hang-over of pacifism in both countries and by the uncertainty that they would ever have to fight. In the third place, Soviet Russia herself, despite much talk about defense, never took any serious risks of becoming involved in war. Since none of the 'satisfied' Powers, *not even Soviet Russia*, was willing to take the chances of war, any effective anti-Fascist coalition was impossible, for without readiness to use force the coalition would risk having its bluff called at the first crisis.

Equally significant in explanation of French and British policy were certain sentimental and dogmatic convictions of both Governments and peoples. In the eyes of all Englishmen as well as the French Leftists Germany since 1922 had been an 'underdog' who deserved better treatment. As one writer remarked in 1936, the English still thought they were dealing with Stresemann, the German Foreign Minister who died in 1929, and would be surprised when they heard of his death. Thus, by playing up to the long-established pro-German and anti-Bolshevik sentiments, Hitler could prevent any real solidarity among his opponents. Furthermore, liberals believed that Hitlerism and, to a certain extent, Italian Fascism had been brought about by two factors: the failure of the other Great Powers to offer Germany and Italy real friendship and conciliation by granting them a genuine status of equality; and the unfortunate economic conditions arising at least in part from the lack of raw materials and markets. The Nazis and Fascists themselves were never tired of talking about equality and living space, and even the Communists had also driven home the argument that one of the basic reasons for German and Italian aggressiveness lay in economic distress. If Great Britain and France flatly opposed Hitler's and Mussolini's ambitions, then there would be no elimination of what were thought to be the causes for their demands. If, however, Britain and France granted them political and economic concessions, the causes for aggression and war might be removed. In any event, the democracies did not feel strong enough by themselves to resist the aggressive Powers. In the circumstances it seemed sensible to attempt a business bargain before risking war in company with Soviet Russia, who was not regarded as very respectable anyway and whose conversion to 'democracy' was so recent as to be the subject of justified suspicion.

Finally, despite the Spanish non-intervention fiasco, the equivo-



cal attitude of Belgium, and the formation of the Rome-Berlin Axis, Great Britain and France could point to hopeful signs such as the attitude of Poland, and the obvious shakiness of the Rome-Berlin and the Berlin-Tokyo combinations. In addition, the French financial situation had been improved by devaluation of the franc on October 1 after an agreement with Great Britain and the United States which was announced on September 25. This agreement included a pledge by the three Powers 'to foster those conditions' which would 'best contribute to the restoration of order in international relations and to pursue a policy' which would 'tend to promote prosperity in the world and to improve the standard of living of peoples.' This accord, together with a French reduction of tariffs, a second tripartite agreement of October which established a gold market, and the formal adherence of Belgium, Switzerland, and the Netherlands to the September 25 monetary agreement were hailed as significant steps by the democracies toward a solution of the worst international economic ills. Encouraged by this collective action of the three Great Powers, the League of Nations pressed forward its work of investigating and trying to solve such further problems as equal commercial access to raw materials for all nations.

While the Blum Government continued its attempts to extend international economic collaboration by negotiating a new commercial treaty with Germany, Great Britain grappled with two major political problems at home. One was successfully handled by the Public Order Bill, introduced on November 11 and made law on December 18, which curbed the menace of Fascism from Mosley and his Black Shirts who had been the cause of rioting and disorder in the summer and autumn. The other was settled by the abdication of King Edward VIII on December 10 and the accession of George VI after a crisis which arose over Edward's determination to marry Mrs. Wallis Warfield Simpson. Even this affair had its Fascist-Communist-Democratic connotation, for in some quarters Prime Minister Baldwin's refusal to permit the marriage was stigmatized as an attempt to prevent the popular king from really leading Great Britain toward a firm democratic policy at home and abroad, while in others the outcome was welcomed on the grounds that Edward had become obviously pro-Nazi.

These events as well as those abroad made clear why, on November 18, Baldwin stressed the need for Englishmen to pull together 'to preserve our liberty and work for our state'; and

why he declared that in contrast with other systems, 'We stand for evolution, progressive, constructive, the result of free debate, free speech, free discussion.' At the same time, Eden in a speech at Leamington on November 20 laid down positive principles of foreign policy when he declared that British arms, if the occasion arose, 'would be used in the defense of France and Belgium against unprovoked aggression' in accordance with Britain's existing obligations. Those, he declared, together with the Iraqi and Egyptian alliances, were Great Britain's definite commitments. In addition, he clearly indicated that Great Britain would protect her vital interest in the Mediterranean as a route of Empire. With respect to collective action, Eden explained to the House of Commons on January 19, 1937, that Great Britain regarded obligations under the League Covenant concerning sanctions to be optional, but was ready 'to cooperate in the common work of political appeasement and economic cooperation.' He further elucidated the British viewpoint by declaring: 'In engaging upon this task, there are certain things which we do not accept. We do not accept that the alternative for Europe lies between dictatorship of the Right and the Left. We do not accept — and let me make this clear — that democracies are the breeding ground of Communism. We regard them rather as its antidote. We are not content to see Europe arming feverishly under the contending standards of rival ideologies. There is a better way. We know it, and we wish to enter upon it.'

Since the Blum Government took virtually the same view and since Delbos on December 4 reciprocated Eden's pledge of aid, there existed at the end of 1936 a genuine Anglo-French 'Axis' in addition to the older and shakier Franco-Czechoslovak-Soviet Alliance, the Little Entente, and the Balkan Entente. In view of the later widely accepted view that France and Great Britain were supinely yielding on every issue to Rome and Berlin, it is worth recalling that they were still steadily refusing to divide Europe into East and West.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, while they did not join Soviet Russia in offering a united front to the Fascintern, they nevertheless firmly refused to ally with Germany and Italy in a revamped Four-Power Pact. The wailing of the Left over the former failure was counterbalanced by the indignant charges

<sup>7</sup> Even Neville Chamberlain in the House of Commons, speaking on November 5, 1936, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, declared that the ultimate aim of any negotiation with Germany ought to be to produce guaranties of security of Eastern as well as Western Europe. See *Survey of International Affairs, 1936*, pp. 281-82.

of the Right that the British and French Governments were missing an opportunity to jump into the bandwagon of the dynamic Powers in their repartition of *Lebensraum* and empire.

A much more valid criticism was that neither France nor Great Britain was pushing rearmament as rapidly as they should. Blum's Government in September put forth a plan for extraordinary expenditure on armament amounting to 14,000,000,000 francs (over half a billion dollars) to be expended in the next four years, whereas Germany was spending at least ten times that sum in one year and in addition, through the inauguration of the Four-Year Plan, was already beginning to put her economy on a war basis. In England, parliamentary debates of November over the floating of a defense loan totaling £400,000,000 revealed that already Baldwin's proud boast of 1934 that England would build an air fleet second to none was belied by the admission that the R.A.F. rated fourth or fifth place among the air fleets of the world. Churchill at this time declared that England had only 960 first-line planes against an estimated strength of at least 1500 for Germany. This disparity in fighting forces between the London-Paris and Rome-Berlin Axes was the real reason for the continued success of the latter in the 'white war' of the following years. It meant that every step toward appeasement was inevitably regarded by Hitler and Mussolini as a sign of weakness rather than good-will and hence an opportunity for further gains for them rather than for genuine reconciliation.

##### *5. Failures of First Appeasement Efforts, 1937*

In December and January 1936-37, Great Britain and France made their first efforts at appeasement as distinguished from previous attempts to regain security through regional pacts. Both Powers were hampered in their negotiations with Germany and Italy by the failure of the Spanish non-intervention policy which they still hoped to make effective and even to extend. They were apparently convinced in December that if they could stop further aid from reaching the contenders in Spain, the civil war would reach a stalemate that would offer an opportunity for mediation and for ending the tension in the Mediterranean. Thus, while they steered the League of Nations Council into an innocuous statement of support for non-intervention, they put forth proposals for prohibiting volunteers from going to Spain and for establishing supervision over the principal points of entry

by land and sea. Their proposals made little headway, however, either with the Loyalists and Nationalists in Spain or with the other Powers, with the result that the Spanish struggle continued to plague them at every turn. Nevertheless Great Britain undertook to effect a rapprochement with Italy while France continued efforts begun in the summer to make a satisfactory economic agreement with Germany.

Great Britain's desire for friendship with Italy was determined not only by her policy of appeasement, but also by special considerations in connection with the Empire. While the Dominions were opposed to any risk of entanglement in continental European affairs, they undoubtedly agreed with Eden's statement of November 5 that freedom of movement in the Mediterranean was not merely a convenience but a 'vital interest.' From the point of view of both Great Britain and the Empire, it was important to avert the danger of an Italian blockade of the most direct route from London to Singapore, and also to avoid pushing Italy into a solid alliance with Germany and Japan, thus adding a triple threat to British sea power. Moreover, in trying to come to terms with Mussolini, Great Britain based her policy on the two assumptions that Italy was now a satisfied Power whose price for renewal of friendship would not be high and that Il Duce would really prefer an Anglo-French alignment to a German one.

This last assumption was undoubtedly correct, although Mussolini's willingness to end the strained relations with Great Britain did not extend to France, whom he refused to admit to the 'Gentleman's Agreement' which was concluded at the turn of the year. He either hoped to divide the two Powers and ultimately gain more thereby, or was averse to negotiating with the Popular Front Government of Léon Blum. Furthermore, Mussolini was neither to be appeased cheaply, nor to be won from his German partner, because in the last analysis what he wanted was a preponderant position in the Mediterranean which could only be achieved at the expense of France and Great Britain. Italy's situation was therefore the reverse of that in 1915 when she joined the Allies, because at that time what she wanted was to be had only at the expense of Austria and Germany.

The negotiation of the Anglo-Italian agreement was preceded by the restoration, on November 6, of economic relations which had been broken by the imposition of sanctions during the Ethiopian crisis. It was accompanied by the tacit though not

formal recognition of the Ethiopian conquest, for on December 21 both Great Britain and France replaced their legations at Addis Ababa by consulates general. The discussions which took place between Ciano and Sir Eric Drummond, the British Ambassador, throughout December were complicated not only by the refusal of Italy to treat with France whose newly appointed Ambassador was not received because his credentials omitted recognition of the King's new title of Emperor, but also by the fear on the part of both Great Britain and France that the landing of Italian forces in the Spanish island of Majorca might presage Italian possession of it as part payment for aid to Franco. The exchange of letters of December 31 between Drummond and Ciano and the Declaration of January 2, 1937, must therefore be read with the Spanish Civil War as well as the Ethiopian background in mind.

In the published Declaration, Great Britain and Italy recognized 'that the freedom of entry into, exit from, and transit through, the Mediterranean is a vital interest both to the different parts of the British Empire and to Italy, and that these interests are in no way inconsistent with each other.' They disclaimed 'any desire to modify or, so far as they are concerned, to see modified the *status quo* as regards national sovereignty of territory in the Mediterranean area.' Supplementing this part of the Declaration was the explicit assurance in the Drummond-Ciano letters that Italy had not undertaken, and would not undertake, any negotiations with General Franco 'whereby the *status quo* of the Western Mediterranean would be altered.' Finally, the two Powers promised 'to respect each other's rights and interests' and agreed to do their best 'to discourage any activities liable to impair the good relations' which they were trying to consolidate. It was rumored that there were additional agreements not stated in the published documents, such as the Italian recognition of the independent status of Egypt as established by the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of August 1936, an Italian pledge to respect the independence and integrity of the smaller states like Greece and Turkey in the eastern Mediterranean who had concluded mutual-assistance treaties with Great Britain for the duration of the League's sanctions against Italy, and a promise to stop Italian radio propaganda against England. Whether or not there was any truth in these rumors, it is a fact that Italy and Great Britain settled certain problems in connection with grazing and watering rights along the Ethiopian fron-

tiers and concerning traffic and transit through British Somaliland ports to Ethiopia.

However, the public in England received the news of the agreement without enthusiasm because of the omission of any reference to the independence of Spain, even though her integrity was assured, and because of the lack of any understanding concerning the limitation of armament in the Mediterranean. Furthermore, any illusion that the Anglo-Italian agreement might mean a cessation of Italian aid to General Franco or a cooling off between Berlin and Rome was quickly dispelled by the news from both capitals. Not only did fresh contingents of Italian troops land at Cadiz within forty-eight hours of the signature of the declaration, but Mussolini actually interpreted the *status quo* in the western Mediterranean to mean not only that no Communist Government could be permitted on the Iberian peninsula, but also that Franco must be victorious.

Berlin professed to be satisfied with the agreement because, according to the German interpretation, it would not adversely affect Italo-German relations, and because it indicated that England was veering toward Franco and the point of view of Italy and Germany concerning Spain. Indeed, so insignificant did the 'Gentleman's Agreement' of January 2 appear, as a result of Italian and German interpretations, that Eden half apologized for it on January 19, saying that, although it was not a pact or a treaty, he hoped it marked the end of strained relations between England and Italy.

The French, who had hoped to be included in the agreement, were cautious in their comments. Foreign Minister Delbos did go so far as to welcome it as the next best thing to a resurrection of the Stresa Front, thus revealing that the Popular Front Government yearned to revert to the diplomacy of Barthou and Laval even though Blum had professed that France was ready to undertake with both Germany and Italy 'the political, economic, and technical conversations which would permit a general settlement of the European problems, . . . the restoration of Europe to a peace footing.'<sup>8</sup> The French Premier's words to the Chamber were but a reflection of what he had told Schacht in August when the latter, on his visit to Paris, became convinced that France would even go so far toward reconciliation as to restore Germany's colonies. Although an interview with the French

<sup>8</sup> From a speech in the Chamber of Deputies as reported by Jacques Kayser in *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, January 1, 1937, p. 11.

Minister of Colonies, published by the *Echo de Paris* on January 15, indicated that the German economic wizard was overly optimistic regarding colonies, there is no doubt that Blum was ready to make far-reaching concessions to effect an agreement with Germany.

Negotiations between France and Germany, however, were rendered difficult by developments in Spain. While Great Britain and France were handling Italian intervention with caution and consideration in view of their hopes of an agreement, they treated Berlin more sternly. In the latter part of December, Eden in London and Delbos in Paris protested to the German Ambassadors against the reported arrival in Spain of fresh German contingents drawn from the regular army. Early in January, when rumors spread that the Germans were gaining complete control of Morocco's mines and strategic ports, not only did the French make vigorous protests to Franco, but also both France and Great Britain began to concentrate their fleets in Spanish waters. Impressed by these acts and by dissension over intervention in Spain among his own advisers, Hitler refrained for the time being from further direct intervention in Spain. Also, at his New Year reception on January 11, the Fuehrer personally assured the French Ambassador that Germany had no desire to change the *status quo* in Morocco; and an official German communiqué to the same effect likewise helped to allay France's suspicions. These steps did not mean that the position of the Axis in Spain was to be weakened, for Goering on his trip to Rome a few days later apparently persuaded Mussolini that he instead of Hitler must assume the burden of aiding Franco to win the war.

Very shortly after the brief Morocco crisis reports of renewed French efforts at an economic agreement again began to circulate. Apparently the French as well as the British were counting heavily upon the triumph in Germany of a group of 'moderates.' Most prominent among them was Schacht, who wanted a return to freer trade conditions, and professed to be willing, in return for the restoration of the former German colonies, to stabilize the existing frontiers in Europe, to discontinue the arms race, and to substitute some workable agreement for the League of Nations. He was opposed by another group led by such Nazis as Goering, who pinned their faith upon the program of economic and military preparations by which Germany would ultimately be in a position to acquire *Lebensraum* on the Continent rather

than in overseas colonies. Although Schacht's faction gradually lost its influence and power until Schacht himself resigned in November 1937 from the Ministry of Economics, he was still confident in January that he could negotiate a deal with the full authority of the German Government behind it. The French, especially such representatives of big business as François-Poncet, Ambassador in Berlin, likewise believed it. Instead of returning Germany's former colonies, however, they wanted to form international companies, with Germans participating, for the exploitation of colonial territories. In addition they wanted an improved clearing system and increased trade between France and Germany. Blum shared these views in considerable measure, no doubt hoping through betterment of international economic conditions to assure the success of his social and economic reforms at home.

Before Blum made his views public, however, Anthony Eden gave Germany an invitation on January 19 to negotiate over both political and economic matters. He declared that Great Britain was prepared to join in 'political appeasement and economic collaboration,' but that the two could not be separated. If Germany wanted economic assistance, she had to prove her 'will to cooperate' by abandoning the doctrine of national exclusiveness, by recognizing every European state as a potential partner, by reducing armaments to a purely defensive level, and by accepting 'such international machinery for the settlement of disputes as will make the League of Nations a benefit to all and a servitude to none.'<sup>9</sup> In effect this offer meant acceptance by Germany, not only of Russia as a European state, but also of 'collective security' as a substitute for national armed force, both of which Hitler and his fellow Nazi leaders had more than once vigorously denounced.

Even though the reaction of the German press to Eden's words was discouraging, Blum discoursed on the same theme at a banquet in Lyons on January 24. He was a little more explicit than Eden as to methods of economic collaboration, hinting for one thing at the possibility of a 'great European, colonial, and international project' to meet Germany's economic needs. While repudiating the idea expressed in the German press that the Reich was being invited to a 'horse trade' of economic for political concessions, and protesting that any agreement must be concluded on the basis of 'perfect equality and mutual con-

<sup>9</sup> Speech in House of Commons, *Documents on International Affairs*, 1937, pp. 17-18.



fidence,' he did echo Eden's words that economics and politics could not be considered independently and that extension of credits to Germany or assistance in getting raw materials should be accompanied by a limitation of armaments. Although he did not rule out bilateral negotiations between France and Germany, and in fact suggested them, he was even more emphatic than Eden in emphasizing that the current problems were European ones and could not be solved by bilateral arrangements. Peace was indivisible, he declared, and France would remain faithful to her allies. With this speech the London-Paris Axis rested its case, awaiting the reply expected in Hitler's Reichstag speech which was scheduled for the fourth anniversary of his chancellorship on Saturday, January 30.

The prospects for a favorable treatment of the Anglo-French offer of economic collaboration in return for political concessions were not good. Aside from the general attitude of the German press, which remained as scornful of Blum's political-economic 'barter' scheme as it had been of Eden's, there were the reports of Goering's ten-day visit to Italy ending on January 23. Although Goering and Mussolini apparently decided to return a soft answer to Anglo-French insistence upon the stoppage of volunteers to Spain, they adhered to the view that General Franco's forces must win and that Soviet influence in Spain should be ousted. As for broader European issues, they still clung to the spirit of the Four-Power Pact, wishing to exclude Russia from European councils, and to assure peace in the West so as to leave Germany and Italy free to venture afield in other directions. Most ominous of all were the intimations that they would not deal with France as long as Léon Blum and the Popular Front continued in power, and as long as the Franco-Soviet Pact remained in force.

Hitler, on January 30, in considerable measure bore out these rumors, especially as he ignored Blum's address except for one indirect reference, and confined his remarks upon Anglo-French proposals to a refutation of Eden's suggestions. Before coming to that, however, and after reviewing domestic achievements and policies, Hitler gave notice that he was completing the process of freeing Germany from the restrictions of Versailles by declaring the abolition of the independent corporate character of the German railways and the Reichsbank, imposed by the treaty for purposes of reparations payments, and by repudiating the war-guilt clause. Having explained why it was necessary to restore

Germany's equality without negotiating with other nations he declared: 'I should like to add here that, as all this has now been accomplished, the so-called period of surprises has come to an end. As a State which is now on an equal juridical footing with all the other States, Germany is more conscious than ever that she has a European task before her, which is to collaborate loyally in getting rid of those problems that are the cause of anxiety to ourselves and also to the nations.'

With this introduction, compounded of unilateral denunciations of the Versailles Treaty and the usual promises to be good in the future, Hitler proceeded to answer Eden. He denied that Germany was seeking isolation, citing her naval treaty with Great Britain, her pacts with Poland and Austria, the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Agreement, and close collaboration with Italy as proof of his contention. He even reiterated his previous declarations that between Germany and France 'there are no grounds for quarrel that are humanly thinkable.' But he refused to give up the Four-Year Plan, and he asserted not only that Germany would have nothing to do with Bolshevism, but that she should even avoid 'close contact with the carriers of these poisonous bacilli . . . beyond the necessary political and commercial relations.' He then insisted that each nation had the right to judge for itself what armament was necessary for defense and that Germany's colonies must be returned to her. In conclusion, he summarized the points 'essential to the general pacification of Europe and world cooperation.' Aside from the usual platitudes reminiscent of his speech in May 1936, he suggested that the agitation of 'international war-mongers' should be checked, that European problems could be 'solved properly only within certain limits,' apparently meaning thereby that peace could not be expected with Bolsheviks, and, finally, that consideration should be shown to 'those nationalities who are forced to live as a minority within other nations.' After declaring that Germany would never again sign a peace incompatible with her honor or her vital interests, he ended on a pacific note: 'Peace is our dearest treasure. Whatever contributions Germany can make towards preserving it, those she will make.'

While European diplomats breathed a sigh of relief that Hitler's latest 'Saturday Surprise' was confined to such things as railways, Reichsbank, and war guilt, and professed to take heart from the conciliatory passages liberally sprinkled throughout his oration, they could not but recognize the truth that he had not

advanced toward conciliation one step beyond his previous statements and had treated such problems as economic collaboration and disarmament in cavalier fashion. He had made no pledges with respect to Eastern Europe, and had announced his continued support of General Franco in order to check the spread of Bolshevik 'bacilli.' Almost the only consolation was that the door to further negotiation had not been slammed shut. Although London was inclined to view the situation more optimistically than Paris, both admitted discouragement in their schemes for a general European settlement. Nevertheless, they did not immediately give up all hope of some security arrangement in the West and of a plan for ameliorating international economic conditions.

#### *6. The van Zeeland Mission and Why It Failed*

Simultaneously with negotiations over the guarantee of Belgium, Great Britain and France on April 3 commissioned van Zeeland, the Belgian Premier, to undertake 'an inquiry into the possibility of obtaining a general reduction of quotas and of other obstacles to international trade.' There were several reasons for this choice of a mediator-in-chief among the Great Powers. Van Zeeland had been unusually successful in restoring economic stability in his own country. Furthermore, he had been a leader in the movement for closer economic collaboration among the 'Oslo States' of Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, and Switzerland whose economic experts on April 17 completed at Brussels the draft of a convention to promote freer trade and signed it on May 28. Finally, his country's policy of neutrality and his own wide acquaintanceship with the statesmen of all countries made him peculiarly suitable for negotiating with both the democracies and the totalitarian Governments.

Van Zeeland's efforts began with a certain promise of success, since his first discussions with Schacht resulted in the latter's public statement on April 14 that Germany was ready to collaborate in all efforts to restore freedom of trade and that she would not exclude Soviet Russia from economic agreements. The van Zeeland report, completed much later than expected on January 26, 1938, after he had visited all European capitals and the United States, offered a plan for a 'pact of economic collaboration' and suggested practical steps toward its adoption.

His proposals, however, were doomed to failure for both economic and political reasons. Among the former, the principal one at this time was the determination of both Germany and Italy to continue the policy of autarchy as part of their preparations for war. Mussolini admirably summarized the reason for this when he said, on May 15: 'In a world like the present, armed to the teeth, to lay down the weapon of self-sufficiency would mean tomorrow, in the case of war, putting ourselves at the mercy of those who possess what is needed to wage war without limit of time or of scruple.' On the other hand, the democratic Powers were not less reluctant to give up such special economic arrangements as those represented by the British intra-Empire agreements. Furthermore, world trade was increasing in 1937 despite restrictions. Finally, against the background of economic nationalism that had become so strong since the depression, it was always easier to conclude bilateral rather than multilateral agreements for the mutual reduction of tariffs and to extend them, if at all, to other nations by the most-favored-nation clause. This was the method adopted in the German-French trade agreement, which was signed on July 10, 1937, and in the Hull trade treaties.

More important than these economic difficulties were the political considerations. For example, the German demand for colonies that had first been raised in 1935 and was reiterated constantly throughout the following years was fundamentally a political demand, since the value of the former German colonies either as sources of raw material or as *Lebensraum* for excess population was almost nil.<sup>10</sup> Like the campaign against Bolshevism, this demand had its internal and its external uses. Within Germany the emphasis upon lack of colonies as a cause of hardship helped to conceal the burden of rearmament. In foreign relations it was a means of dividing France and Great Britain, for the French seemed much more willing to dicker with Germany over this question than the British, who steadfastly refused to consider it on the ground that they could not restore to a rearmed Germany excellent strategic bases from which to harry British commerce in time of war. The demand for colonies was also a question of prestige politics. It could scarcely have been much else because Hitler undoubtedly adhered, along with such fol-

<sup>10</sup> See Samuel van Valkenburg, *Political Geography* (New York, 1939), Chs. XXIV and XXV, and particularly Chart B, appendix, where the value of colonial production has been computed by colonies and products.

lowers as Goering, to his own original theory that colonies were a source of weakness to Germany whose future lay in Continental Europe where access to natural resources and their exploitation could be carried on without risk of interference from the great sea Powers.

The pursuance in 1937 of this fundamental Nazi aim not only prevented any collaboration among the Powers on a European scale, but also meant that Germany continued to work for the disintegration rather than the integration of European political and economic unity. Even the idea of a Western security and air pact that continued to be discussed at monthly intervals was completely dropped after July. The British, French, and German guarantee to Belgium represented a negation rather than a fulfillment of the original intention. Also throughout the year there was the open sore of the Spanish Civil War which continued as in 1936 to cause dissension and mistrust. In fact, it is not too much to say that the recurring crises over Spain, over the Mediterranean problems connected with it, and over the Japanese attack upon China which began in July, constituted the key to the significant European developments in 1937, whether they were in the nature of economic and political appeasement or of a struggle to build bulwarks against the totalitarian despots in Europe and Asia.

## CHAPTER NINE

### THE BERLIN-ROME-TOKYO BLOC, 1937

BOTH the internal and the international aspects of the Spanish war in the year 1937 may be divided into two periods. The first began with the siege of Madrid in November 1936 and lasted until about the middle of June 1937. The second period, marked in Spain by the shift of interest from Madrid to the remaining Republican strongholds in the north along the shores of the Bay of Biscay, was introduced by one of the ever-recurrent crises in connection with the non-intervention policy and was accompanied by significant internal changes in Great Britain, France, and Soviet Russia.

#### *1. The Spanish War: Politics and Crises*

During the first half of 1937, the Nationalists succeeded in taking Málaga on the south coast, February 8, but failed to enter Madrid. Their drive to complete the encirclement of the city and cut it off from the new capital at Valencia was dramatically defeated when at the battle of Brihuega, March 8-22, Italian forces were decisively beaten and forced to retreat with considerable loss. Thereafter the major effort of the Nationalists was directed toward the defeat of the Basques in the north and the occupation of Viscaya with its valuable iron mines and the Asturias with their coal deposits. In this campaign, the ruthless destruction of Guernica on April 26 furnished more fuel for propagandists on either side than any other event. The Loyalists and their supporters claimed that it had been destroyed by German bombers from the air, while the Nationalists alleged that the principal damage had been done by 'Reds' within the town. Whatever the truth of the matter, the Nationalists slowly mopped up the opposing forces, reached Bilbao early in June, and entered the city on the nineteenth, thus gaining not only a valuable industrial area but an excellent port for future communications with Germany.

Behind the battle lines both sides attempted to consolidate

their political positions. General Franco's task was made difficult by the divergence in views among his supporters who may be roughly classified into two groups: those who wanted a return to the old order, and those who wanted to build a new one. Most important among the former were the *Requetés* who sought the restoration of a Carlist monarchy; among the latter were the Phalangists (*Falange Española*), a party founded by the son of the former dictator, Primo de Rivera, which advocated the establishment of a corporative state of the totalitarian type. Since the Phalangists wanted to curb the power of the church and to subordinate the interests of capital to the welfare of the united nation, their program was capable of a wide appeal, a fact attested by their rapid growth throughout Nationalist-held territory. For this reason and also because they formed the ideological link with Germany and Italy, without whose help Franco could not count upon ultimate victory, the General, on April 19, 1937, adopted all but one of their twenty-seven points as the official program of his Government and merged the Phalangists with the *Requetés* to form one legal party called the *Falange Española Tradicionalista y de los J.O.N.S.*<sup>1</sup> This action by no means ended dissension among the Nationalist forces, but was a significant step in the direction of their future political orientation.

On the Loyalist side the resistance of Madrid gave the Republican Government time in which to train, discipline, and equip its raw militia. Since the Communists took a leading part in this work, they were credited by many observers with virtual control of the Government. In view of the dissension and bitterness which developed among the various Spanish parties and leaders who composed the Popular Front, it is difficult to draw conclusions concerning the truth of the situation except to state that in the first six or seven months of the Government's stay at Valencia, lines of cleavage developed between the more radical elements and the moderates in which the Communists sided with the latter even though it meant that their Fifth Regiment was merged in the regular army in January 1937 and their active director, the Russian Ambassador Marcel Rosenberg, was recalled on February 20. Numerous armed clashes among the contending parties broke out early in May, resulting in the suppression

<sup>1</sup> The initials stand for *Juventudes de la Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista*, which means Youth of the National Socialist Offensive, and thus incorporates the terms made famous by the German Nazis.

of the Anti-Stalinist P.O.U.M. of Barcelona and the ousting of Anarcho-Syndicalists from the Government, thus giving the Valencia régime a turn to the Right. The Government, formed on May 17, was headed by Dr. Juan Negrín, a Socialist, and included two Communists. Alvarez del Vayo resigned from his post of Foreign Minister out of respect for his fallen chief, Caballero, but continued to represent Spain at meetings of the League of Nations and to work with Negrín in the attempt to convince the outside world that Loyalist Spain was a democratic republic rather than a 'Red' soviet.

This situation scarcely altered the game which the Great Powers continued to play. As a matter of fact in this second period of the Spanish crisis, when the intervention of Germany and especially of Italy in favor of Franco came to be quite openly admitted and even advertised, the game became one of tag rather than of hide-and-seek as before. The prominence of Russians in the councils of the Loyalists was offset by the presence and influence of the Germans and Italians at Nationalist headquarters. At the end of 1936, observers guessed that the International Brigade, recruited for the Loyalists from all countries, numbered anywhere between seven and fifteen thousand, though some raised that number to thirty thousand in the early months of 1937. On the other side, Germany had between ten and fifteen thousand men, while Italy at the beginning of 1937 began to pour troops into Spain which numbered between forty and fifty thousand by the middle of March. They were present at Málaga as well as Brihuega, and were openly congratulated by Mussolini for their participation in the taking of Bilbao.

Throughout the early part of 1937, France and Great Britain continued their ineffective attempts to stop more volunteers from being sent to Spain. After two months and a half of negotiations they finally steered through the Non-Intervention Committee an agreement to prohibit the enlistment, transit, and departure of volunteers which was to go into effect on February 21, but they were unable until April 19 to put into operation a scheme for the control of Spanish waters and frontiers in order to enforce this and previous agreements. Even the plan was inadequate, for observers on land and sea were only to report, but not to stop, efforts to smuggle volunteers or arms and materials of war into Spain. Furthermore, the provision for a naval patrol, according to which Italy and Germany watched the Loyalist, and France and Great Britain the Nationalist, coasts in order to enforce the



rules for examining cargoes and crews, was bound to cause more friction than harmony. Indeed, the Anglo-French attempt to pursue the non-intervention policy continued to cause dissension not only between rival international camps, but within them and within each country. Goering, Neurath, and Blomberg paid visits to Italy in April and May that were interpreted as efforts to oil the squeaking hubs of the Axis. France, as a result of pressure upon the Government from Socialists as well as Communists, showed signs of breaking from British leading-strings, while Soviet Russia was suspected of flirtations with Germany, and the British of dealings with Franco.

Suspicion that the British Government was secretly favoring the Spanish Nationalists was aroused by its connivance with Franco's attempt to establish a blockade of Bilbao in March. Although the opposition in the House of Commons launched a bitter attack upon the Government's policy, it failed to reduce appreciably the solid majority behind it. The truth of the matter seems to be that the British Government was but reflecting the division of opinion among the people. As one writer put it,<sup>2</sup> they viewed the situation as presenting a choice of two evils: a Franco victory would strengthen his backers, Italy and Germany, but a Loyalist triumph would advance the cause of radicalism and the Comintern. While it was generally believed that the majority in England preferred to see the Loyalists win and belittled the fears of the Conservatives concerning the 'Redness' of future Spain, the numbers and the influence of the Tories were sufficient to prevent open espousal of the Loyalist cause. To be sure, complaints against England in the German and Italian press suggested, as calm critics averred, that in general the British policy, and particularly the refusal to recognize Franco's belligerency, had been directed more against Italy, Germany, and the Nationalists than for them. As one commentator observed, British policy 'has united on doing nothing, and divided on doing something firm; it has been indecisive and worried, fearful and yet in a degree farsighted.'<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, suspicion of the policy pursued toward Spain in the spring of 1937 was undoubtedly an important element in the subsequent mistrust of Chamberlain's whole appeasement program.

<sup>2</sup> G. M. Gathorne-Hardy, 'The Spanish Situation Reviewed,' *International Affairs*, XVI (May-June 1937), 417.

<sup>3</sup> D. Graham Hutton, 'British Policy Towards Spain,' *Foreign Affairs*, XV (July 1937), 673.

Great Britain's cautious Spanish policy, moreover, gained little for her in her relations with Italy which continued to be strained. A press war developed late in February, not only over Italian activities in Spain, but also over what seemed to be the needlessly cruel and revengeful treatment of Ethiopians after the attempt at Addis Ababa of February 19 to assassinate General Graziani, the Italian viceroy. Mussolini's Libyan tour in March, when he posed as the friend and champion of Islam, and the revival of anti-British radio broadcasts in Arabic from Bari did not soothe the British, while their rearmament program was persistently regarded by the Italians as a direct threat to Italy. Further cause for irritation arose again over Spain when the question of withdrawing volunteers was raised. Grandi on March 23 not only declared to the Non-Intervention Committee that discussion of this matter could serve no practical purpose, but also expressed the hope that no Italians would leave Spain until the end of the civil war. At this, France and the Soviet joined in an attack upon Italy's policy, but tension remained greatest between London and Rome. It reached a high point when on May 8, a few days before the coronation of George VI, Mussolini recalled Italian journalists from London and banned all but three British newspapers from Italy. In the meantime, however, the Duce's Spanish policy had become more conciliatory, for in mid-April Grandi reversed his attitude of March toward the withdrawal of volunteers, thus making possible the completion, on May 24, by the Non-Intervention Committee of an elaborate plan for its accomplishment. At the same time, the effect of Italy's concessions might well have been counteracted in London by Alvarez del Vayo's presentation to the League of Nations' Council of a White Book containing documents taken from killed and captured Italian soldiers which, he charged, proved that Italian units aiding Franco constituted 'a veritable army of occupation'; but the plans of the Non-Intervention Committee and Alvarez del Vayo's documents were quickly lost to sight as a result of the events of May 29, when German policy rather than Italian became the center of interest.

☛ On that day, while the League Council was passing another innocuous resolution calling for the observance of non-intervention and the withdrawal of volunteers, two Loyalist airplanes bombed the German cruiser *Deutschland*, as it lay in the harbor of Iviza, killing twenty-two sailors and wounding eighty-three more. Patrol ships of other nations had likewise suffered from

bombs or torpedoes, but not to such an extent. A storm of indignation arose in the Reich, and the German Navy on May 31, by way of reprisal against the Spanish 'Reds,' severely shelled the Loyalist city of Almería. At the same time, the German Government announced its withdrawal, not only from the naval patrol, but also from the Non-Intervention Committee. Italy, who had herself suffered the loss of naval officers from Loyalist bombs, promptly followed suit, and also joined Germany in demanding as the condition for returning to the patrol a guarantee that any such attack as that on the *Deutschland* should not occur again.

This action once more aroused fears that the Fascist Powers meant to back Franco openly and that such action would loose the long-dreaded flood waters of European war. But Great Britain again stepped into the breach in an attempt to reconstruct the broken dam of non-intervention and especially to insure that Germany and Italy would not take further action without consulting the other Powers. British efforts were made easier by the fact, which had become obvious during the first week in June, that Germany and Italy were not yet willing to push matters to the point of risking war. On June 12, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy succeeded in working out a compromise agreement which sought to assure the safety of patrol ships from attack, and on June 16, without awaiting the adherence of the contending factions in Spain to the new regulations, Germany and Italy gave notice of their return to the patrol. Germany was even credited with being anxious to get out of Spain, but hopes built upon such interpretations and upon the new accord were short-lived because alleged torpedo attacks upon the German cruiser *Leipzig*, announced on June 19, threw the fat into the fire again. The general atmosphere of conciliation before that date and the sudden change for the worse afterward can only be explained by the turn of events in Great Britain, the U.S.S.R., and France.

## *2. Chamberlain's First Appeasement Effort*

On May 28, 1937, Neville Chamberlain took Stanley Baldwin's place as British Premier, and a few days later became leader of the Conservative Party. Chamberlain's Cabinet presented few new faces when it appeared before Parliament on June 4. Chamberlain himself had held the key position of Chancellor

of the Exchequer for many years, and had probably been as influential as Baldwin in policy-making for some time. Sir John Simon, who became Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lord Halifax, who replaced Ramsay MacDonald as Lord President of the Council; and Sir Samuel Hoare at the Home Office were all familiar figures, and, it may also be noted, had been prominently identified with appeasement efforts of the past, notably those with respect to Japan and Italy. Among the younger men, Eden retained the post of Secretary for Foreign Affairs; Leslie Hore-Belisha went to the War Office; and Duff Cooper relinquished the latter position to become head of the Admiralty. The significance of these appointments to key positions lay in the fact that the older men all had much the same outlook as Chamberlain, and the younger men, including Anthony Eden, who might have differed from him on principles, were closely tied to him by friendship or were in his debt for political advancement.

Chamberlain, who had already taken a hand in inaugurating the appeasement policy toward the European dictators, was not only determined to continue it, but also to take an active personal part in attempting to make it succeed. He was no doubt sincere in his abhorrence of war and in his conviction that he could deal successfully with Hitler and Mussolini. His was the business man's instinct: to bargain with his opponents if he could, to fight them only when bargaining failed. Unfortunately, he lacked the training and background for diplomacy, having spent half his life in business and the rest in domestic politics. Like his father, Joe Chamberlain, whose excursions into foreign affairs caused his contemporaries to wag their heads dubiously, and unlike his half-brother, Austen Chamberlain, Neville represented the amateur in diplomacy. His naiveté and credulity, sensitiveness and vanity scarcely suited him for the rôle he chose to play. Had he been willing to work with his Foreign Office and its professional staff, he might have been saved some of his later disappointments, but he preferred to rely instead upon such intimate personal advisers as Sir Horace Wilson, faithful civil servant, but even less fitted by training and experience than Chamberlain to navigate the turbulent international waters. As for his other advisers, Simon and Hoare had been in the past rather conspicuous failures at the Foreign Office because their policies had either made Britain's position weaker or had been repudiated by Parliament and the country.

What was the policy that Chamberlain attempted to pursue?

It was twofold: rearmament and appeasement. Since he seemed to be convinced, however, that appeasement would succeed, he failed to devote to rearmament the energy which international conditions demanded. When he entered office, he was undoubtedly correct in believing that Great Britain's position was a very weak one, for until 1939 or 1940, when the plans for rearmament were to be fulfilled, England could not risk war. Anthony Eden, in reply to a speech by Lloyd George on June 25, unquestionably expressed the views of his chief at the same time that he revealed England's helplessness when he declared that 'to keep this country at peace is a great contribution to the peace of Europe; and whatever may be said about "peace at *any* price," if the Right Honorable gentleman puts it "peace at *almost any* price," I shall scarcely quarrel with him.' Chamberlain himself in December 1937 described the goal toward which he was working as 'a general settlement, . . . when reasonable grievances may be removed, when suspicions may be laid aside, and when confidence may again be restored.'

The British people could scarcely quarrel with these objectives, not even with that of rearmament, for by 1937 everyone had come to realize that force was the only language which the dictators understood. What Labor objected to, however, was Chamberlain's willingness to play the dictators' game of bilateral negotiation instead of emphasizing and rebuilding, if possible, a collective peace system. Chamberlain was too much of a conservative to see the advantage of such a scheme, which meant British responsibility in Eastern Europe as well as in the West and in the Mediterranean. He sought limited liability, failing apparently to appreciate that he could not have peace with Germany and Italy where British interests were directly menaced, if he permitted them to expand and grow strong in other directions where British interests did not seem to be immediately involved. But this attitude was not alone determined by his own outlook and that of his party in Great Britain; it was also that of the British Dominions.

While Chamberlain was assuming office, the Imperial Conference, which began its deliberations on the morrow of George VI's coronation, was concluding its sessions. The Imperial Conference of 1937 had long been in preparation. It was anticipated as a means of uniting the self-governing Dominions with Great Britain on such matters as foreign policy, imperial defense, and economic problems. Ever since the Peace Conference of 1919,

the attitude of the Dominions on such matters had been an increasingly important consideration, because Great Britain could no longer count upon them for unquestioning support in times of crisis. After the Imperial Conference of 1926, indeed, England had been in the position of the head of a coalition rather than that of a commander whose wishes would automatically be obeyed. By 1937, it was more than ever important, in view of Great Britain's relative weakness in the face of the aggressive totalitarian Powers, to know where the Dominions stood.

While the resolutions at the end of the Conference, published on June 16, were rather vague and indefinite, nobody could doubt that the Dominions stood for appeasement. As a matter of fact they could not unite on any other policy. Canada and South Africa, because of their racial composition and their geographical location, were staunchly opposed to entanglements in Europe. Their attitude resembled and was partly influenced by that of the United States whose policy had recently been expressed in the revised Neutrality Act that went into effect on May 1. New Zealand with its Labor Government was the only Dominion that opposed appeasement and criticized British policy in Ethiopia and Spain. Australia, most keen of all the Dominions about imperial cooperation, recognized the dangers in an Italian challenge to the imperial route through the Mediterranean, but was more concerned with Japan's activity in the Pacific with which she proposed to deal by means of a regional pact. In short, the Imperial Conference supplied an additional reason why Chamberlain should pursue appeasement.

Considering all circumstances then — Chamberlain's own personality and character, the composition of his Cabinet, the attitude of the Dominions, the relative weakness of Great Britain in armament, and the threefold menace to her interests arising from the aggressiveness of Germany, Italy, and Japan in widely scattered regions of the world — the only possible course for the new Government was that of appeasing at least one of the aggressors. The first move in that direction — toward Italy — had proved to be a failure. Efforts to come to terms with Japan, throughout the spring of 1937, were soon to fail. There remained Germany, to whom Chamberlain immediately turned, as his father had done under somewhat similar circumstances about forty years before.

An Anglo-German rapprochement had long been in preparation. It had been Ribbentrop's reason for going to London,

but he had not been very successful outside the circle of business men and nobility who composed the Anglo-German Fellowship. Prominent appeasers, such as Rothermere, Tory journalist, and Lansbury, 'optimistic Parsifal of British pacifism,'<sup>4</sup> continued to court the Nazis. Also on May 3, the very day that Neurath was visiting Mussolini in Rome in order to display to the world the solidarity of the Rome-Berlin Axis, Lord Lothian, whom American Ambassador Dodd thought to be more Fascistic than any other Englishman he had met, came to Berlin at Goering's invitation and talked for two hours with Hitler over the Spanish situation and Anglo-German relations. Perhaps these goings and comings had little real influence on the British Government, although, supplemented as they were by talks with General von Blomberg who came to London for the coronation and by reports of Schacht's conciliatory words in Paris at the end of May, they may well have confirmed Chamberlain in his determination to try negotiations with Berlin. If reports be true, Hitler and other Nazi leaders had impressed their English friends with their love of peace, their willingness to postpone the colonial issue, and their readiness to discuss both security and economic problems.

The first step by the Government toward appeasement was the appointment of Nevile Henderson to the Embassy at Berlin. Although this was decided upon in January, it was not until April 30 that Henderson reached his new post after leaving Argentina. Impressed by Chamberlain's and Baldwin's insistence that he was to do everything possible to work with the Nazis, he went out of his way to make the Germans feel that he was not only their friend, but even a convert to their ideology.<sup>5</sup> When presented to Hitler on May 11, he declared that he firmly intended to do his best to promote Anglo-German understanding. In his first public address, delivered before the German counterpart of the Anglo-German Fellowship on June 1, he went further, and, after chiding his fellow countrymen for paying too much attention to dictatorship and too little to the great social experiment in Germany, he denied that England wanted to encircle Germany or that there was any question between them that could not be solved by good-will. 'Guarantee us peace and

<sup>4</sup> This apt phrase is Frederick T. Birchall's, *New York Times*, April 25, 1937, Sect. 4, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Nevile Henderson, *Failure of a Mission* (New York, 1940), Chs. 1-4; and William E. Dodd, *Ambassador Dodd's Diary* (New York, 1941), pp. 413, 419-22.

peaceful evolution in Europe,' he said, 'and Germany will find that she has no more sincere, and, I believe, more useful friend in the world than Great Britain.'

Throughout the month of May, the British Government seconded Henderson's efforts to establish good relations with the Germans by refraining from criticizing German policy in Spain and permitting all criticism of the Axis to be heaped upon Italy — a procedure reminiscent of the reverse situation in December of the previous year. At the end of the month they instructed Henderson to make the first attempt at improving Anglo-German relations by inviting Foreign Minister von Neurath to London at an early date primarily to discuss naval control of Spanish waters, but also to review the whole international situation. What inducements the British Ambassador held out to von Neurath are not known for certain, but to judge from his conversation with Ambassador Dodd at this same time, Henderson probably hinted at a free hand for Germany in Central and Southeastern Europe, British abandonment of an exclusive French alliance, and a Franco victory in Spain. This amounted to giving Germany a dominant position on the Continent in return for non-interference with the British Empire and its control of the seas. Chamberlain himself two years later, confirmed the first point when he said that it had never 'entered our thoughts to isolate Germany or to stand in the way of the natural and legitimate trade in Central and South-Eastern Europe. . . .' While the Prime Minister and Henderson had always emphasized the difference between conquest and the peaceful pursuit of commerce, they may not have made that distinction clear in June 1937.<sup>6</sup>

It is probable that a free hand on the Continent is what Hitler hoped to obtain from the Chamberlain Government when he agreed that von Neurath should visit London sometime between June 23 and 28, after his return from a Balkan tour which had already been arranged. This decision was reached, apparently, in connection with the agreement among the four Western Powers that enabled Germany and Italy to reenter the naval patrol of Spanish waters on June 16. But suddenly, on June 20, the day after the announcement of the *Leipzig* incident, Neurath notified Henderson that the visit could not now take place. The latter insisted upon an interview with Hitler, but found the

<sup>6</sup> See Dodd, *Diary*, pp. 419-21; 'Von Neurath's Visit to London,' *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, June 8, 1937, p. 493; and (on Chamberlain in 1939) *Times Weekly Edition*, May 17, 1939, p. 9.



Fuehrer adamant in refusing to let his Foreign Minister go to London at the moment. Henderson blamed Ribbentrop for upsetting the arrangements and represented the German Ambassador in London as determined to prevent his superior's visit because he looked upon it as an insult to himself. Probably Ambassador Dodd was much nearer the truth of the situation than Henderson when he recorded: 'With Russia in its supposed weakened position and the Popular Front in France (30 per cent Communist) fallen, Hitler apparently thought the time was approaching for him to dictate to Europe. . . . The English had apparently made liberal promises to Germany, but Hitler, it seems, demanded more. . . . England had indicated it could not go farther and Hitler stood on his sensational demands and so refused to allow von Neurath to attend the London conference.' There can be little doubt that Hitler, who may have been persuaded by the moderates like Neurath, Blomberg, and Schacht to accept the invitation in the first place, came to the conclusion that events in the U.S.S.R. and in France would enable Germany to gain far more by truculence than by friendly discussion.

### *3. Stalin's Purges and Blum's Fall*

Although the Communist Party purge in Russia and the trials of August 1936 and January 1937, resulting for the first time in the shooting of Old Bolsheviks, had already aroused world-wide interest, the execution of eight high-ranking generals on June 12 was nothing short of a sensation. Why did Stalin shoot or imprison his former associates, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Piatakov, Radek, Sokolnikov, Tukhachevsky, and all the others, leaving only three or four men besides himself among those who had stood about Lenin in 1917? What did the purges have to do with Soviet foreign relations? Neither of these questions, especially the second, can even yet be answered with absolute certainty. The Soviet Government attempted to make the world believe that it was protecting itself against a conspiracy led by Trotsky to overthrow the established régime with the aid of Germany, Japan, and Poland, who were to be rewarded with large slices of Soviet territory. The Trotskyists insisted that the purges were the inevitable result of Stalin's departure from true Communism and his desire to establish his own personal rule which was impossible as long as so many of his former fellow revolutionaries remained to oppose him. The Governments

named in the indictments of the Bolsheviks of course denied any connection with the accused.

Efforts of observers and interpreters to discover the truth of the matter have served to make confusion worse confounded. Krivitsky, who claims to have known the secrets of the OGPU as a high-ranking member of the organization, asserts that Stalin shot his generals because they were opposed to his domestic and foreign policies, and chose a time when he thought that there was the possibility of agreement with Hitler. In support of this, Krivitsky alleges that secret negotiations were going on between Stalin and Hitler in the spring of 1937 which reached the point where Hitler actually sent the draft of a treaty by a Russian agent, Kandelaki, to Stalin, who accordingly felt so sure that there would be no war with Hitler that he decided immediately to settle old grudges against the generals. According to Krivitsky the evidence against them was supplied by the German Gestapo itself, which was, it would appear, attempting to weaken Russia's army while Hitler was pretending to be friendly with Stalin.<sup>7</sup>

There is ground for something like Krivitsky's point of view. For example, there were rumors in April 1937 that negotiations were on foot between Germany and the Soviet. From the summer of 1936 right on through the years to August 1939, there were prophecies or rumors of German-Soviet agreements. It is known that elements in both Russia and Germany never gave up the Rapallo policy of 1922 which had been fruitful for both the Reich and the Soviet, particularly in economic and military cooperation. Hitler's advent to power had not ended these hopes. He himself renewed the Treaty of 1926 with Russia by which both parties promised not to join coalitions hostile to one another and to observe neutrality if the other were attacked. Neither party to that treaty denounced it, even while condemning the other for being the greatest villain on the Continent. The German *Reichswehr* certainly wanted to avoid a possible two-front war, at all costs. Soviet Russia in 1937 also wanted to avoid a two-front war, the possibility of which loomed larger than ever after the announcement of the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact in November 1936.

On the other hand, good authorities hold that there was a genuine pro-German conspiracy in Russia, and that the French, or the Czechs, provided the evidence upon which the Russian generals were condemned to death. It has been further pointed

<sup>7</sup> See W. G. Krivitsky, *In Stalin's Secret Service* (New York, 1939), Chs. 3 and 4.

out that some of the generals had particularly close connections with the German *Reichswehr*. It is alleged, for example, that General Uborevich was the guest of Blomberg at the German maneuvers of September 1936 and was shown greater consideration and permitted to see more of Germany's military secrets than were even the Italians. While some of these allegations are not contradictory, if one assumes that there were two groups in Russia and two groups in Germany who were perfectly ready to double-cross one another, the picture as presented still does not make sense.

Without any claim to finality, the following seems to be the most reasonable guess as to what was happening. There was a serious internal conflict in Russia between the Stalinist group which had been in the saddle since 1928 and the 'outs' made up of the Old Bolsheviks who had never really given up their quarrel with Stalin over the tactics to be pursued in industrializing and collectivizing Soviet Russia. Since debate was no longer possible, the opponents of Stalin resorted to the same conspiratorial methods which they had used against the Tsar. Stalin, on the other hand, was becoming more and more dictatorial and accordingly had to eliminate all possible opponents and even to escape criticism by throwing blame for all Soviet shortcomings upon ready-made devils — Trotsky and foreign spies and wreckers. This was the fundamental purpose of the Moscow trials. But besides this internal conflict, there was an external problem to be dealt with. Reduced to its simplest terms, it was how to preserve peace for the Soviet Union until the completion of the planned program, or at least until progress had reached the point where Russia could successfully resist an attack from hostile Powers.

Stalin's first solution was to swing the U.S.S.R. into the *status-quo* camp, support collective security, and bolster it up by means of the mutual-assistance pacts with France and Czechoslovakia. He attempted to procure a non-aggression pact with Japan in the Far East without success and to keep the door open for understanding with Germany by means of trade agreements. Collective security, however, proved to be a broken reed after the collapse of the League over the Ethiopian crisis and the pusillanimity of France and Great Britain in handling Hitler's Rhineland coup. The Anglo-French policy in the Spanish crisis supplied further evidence that the Western democracies could not even be relied upon to defend their own interests, let alone

those of Soviet Russia, who had, of course, through a series of moves culminating in the democratic constitution of 1936 been trying to prove to the world that she belonged ideologically as well as politically to the democratic group of Powers in opposition to the Fascist.

Both the Stalin group and the anti-Stalinists were at one in taking a realistic view of the situation and in realizing that if the policy of resistance to Germany failed, there was always the alternative of alliance with Germany. Both groups were undoubtedly convinced that the prime consideration for Russia was a breathing space somewhat like that gained by Lenin in 1918 when he signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The difference between them, however, lay in the use of that breathing space and in the timing of the approach to Germany. Perhaps the anti-Stalinists envisioned as their immediate objective the ousting of Stalin and readoption of the pristine Communist objective, world revolution. Perhaps some of the generals, especially Tukhachevsky, cared little for Communism and were primarily concerned with the establishment of a military empire *à la* Napoleon. The temporary relinquishment of the Ukraine would not be too great a price to pay when one could confidently expect to get it back either with the aid of a proletarian revolution or a highly disciplined and mechanized Russian mass army.

Stalin's policy was more canny and more cautious. There was no need to sell out to Hitler yet, even though he might negotiate. The time had not yet come when open collaboration with Germany was necessary. From Stalin's point of view, the danger to be met in Europe was twofold: that of British and French appeasers tempting Hitler to attack the U.S.S.R. by giving him a free hand; and that of Hitler's attempts to undermine Stalin and weaken his régime by intrigues with his enemies. The purges were designed to meet the latter; negotiations with Germany to meet both. Danger of a German attack upon Russia was not imminent as long as Spain held out, and as long as the Czechoslovak and French pacts stood in the way. If and when those bulwarks disappeared and attack did become imminent, Stalin might be able to extricate himself by playing up to the pro-Soviet section of the German Government and by shunting the war into the West, thus out-appeasing the Western appeasers. Only such assumptions as these concerning Stalin's aims and methods explain what was happening in the Soviet, and are plausible whether or not one accepts the view that the Soviet

explanations of the trials and purges were pure inventions of Stalin, or whether one believes that the generals he shot were pro-German or pro-French. He had to keep a free hand above everything else, to refrain from pulling the Western democracies' chestnuts out of the fire by fighting Germany single-handed, and to safeguard himself if they refused to rescue him from the flames by resisting German expansion.

On the German side, the assumption of divided views also holds good. There is no doubt that Hitler had been attempting to 'soften up' the Soviet for at least two years prior to 1937, and that German spies, and Italian and Japanese as well, had been at work to undermine the Soviet régime, just as Nazi business men, journalists, and secret agents had been at work in the democracies to the same end. While Hess, Rosenberg, and probably Goering wanted to work for an understanding with the West that would enable them to win *Lebensraum* in the East at the expense of Russia, the *Reichswehr*, Goebbels, and Ribbentrop were swinging round to the view that it would be better to make a deal with the Soviet, or at least to keep open the door for one just as a safeguard against being caught in a two-front conflict, should the Western Powers attempt to resist Germany's expansion. Hitler seems to have wavered between the two points of view, though there is not much doubt that he was realistic enough to recognize the value of keeping up contacts with Moscow when no one could foresee which way Germany might have to turn first, West or East.

Whether or not Stalin did seek a definite agreement with Germany in 1937 and whether or not Hitler went so far as to draft one, certain facts are known. Hitler gave a particularly warm welcome in a ceremony at his own Berchtesgaden retreat to the newly appointed Soviet Ambassador, Yurenev, in July. The Soviet Government had obligingly withdrawn Jews from the Berlin Embassy. Trade relations continued to be so good that Germany in the first seven months of 1937 supplied a higher percentage of Soviet imports than any other country. Those in England and France who pointed out these anomalies and predicted an eventual German-Soviet alliance, if the democracies failed to resist German expansion, were silenced by the argument that the chasm between Nazis and Stalinists was too wide to be bridged, or by the propaganda that Russia was too weak, as a result of the effect of the purges upon the administration and the army, to be of any value to the democracies.

Thus, whether Soviet Russia were weaker or not, and whether Stalin were willing to cooperate with Hitler or not, the Fuehrer could count upon a lack of cooperation between East and West that would make his road smoother.

What further induced Hitler to break off the negotiations with England from which Neville Henderson had hoped to gain so much was the political situation in France that led to Blum's fall on June 21. Hitler had been disappointed in his expectation of a French civil war in the autumn of 1936. Now, not only he but many others thought that France would be reduced to complete impotence by internal strife between the Right and the Left.

The immediate occasion for Blum's fall was his demand for full power to decree any measure needed 'to assure the recovery of public finances and to meet attacks against public savings and credit.' Although the Chamber granted the request on June 16, the Senate, which was more conservative than the lower house, adopted an alternative proposal on June 19 which constituted a refusal of Blum's demand. When two days of discussion failed to secure reconsideration, the first Popular Front Government resigned after a little more than a year in office. At bottom the issue was still the same as that raised in 1934: Was France to be reformed in such a way as to give greater political power and economic security to the masses, or was it to remain conservative? Was the Left to rule France or the Right?

In attempting to give the workers such things as collective bargaining and the forty-hour week (never universally adopted in France), to make the Bank of France the servant rather than the master of the French Government, to nationalize the armament industry, and in general to raise the standard of living, Blum had further alienated the investors who had already lost faith in France before he came to power. His policy had resulted in a slight increase in production and consumption and in important shifts in the distribution of income from government employees and those receiving a fixed income to manual laborers and industrial entrepreneurs. Despite the fact that large-scale capitalists enjoyed a greater increase in earnings than any other group, capital continued to be hoarded or to flow from the country as it had before Blum came into office. On the other hand, the value of imports increased over that of exports, thus offsetting the advantages that might have been expected from devaluation of the franc. At the same time government expendi-

ture rose with the greater burdens of rearmaments and public works. The fault of the Blum Government, however, lay not in its reforms but in its lack of vigor and aggressiveness. Instead of adopting some system of exchange control in order to keep fearful and recalcitrant capitalists from sending their money abroad, Blum attempted to win their cooperation by calling a halt in reforms in February and by cutting public expenditures. When this expedient failed, Blum found himself facing an empty treasury that could not be filled by borrowing. Such was the situation in June when the Senate refused to give him the extraordinary powers which he might not have needed had he pursued a firmer course at an earlier date. Nevertheless, they voted them to his successor, Chautemps, who summoned Bonnet from the Embassy at Washington to take over the portfolio of finance.

While the Popular Front remained in nominal control of the Government, whose composition represented only a slight shift to the Right, its original aim was frustrated and its high hope of far-reaching social reform dimmed. France remained split between the Left which became increasingly mistrustful and suspicious of the trend toward more conservative government, and the Right which was more and more convinced, with the aid of much Nazi and Fascist money and propaganda, that a defeat by Hitler was preferable to a victory under a Left-Wing Government. The affair of the Hooded Men, the *Cagoulauds*, in the autumn of 1937 revealed that the reactionaries, including even high army officers as well as wealthy business men, would resort to the use of arms in complicity with foreign foes to defeat the Left's ideal of democracy. Nevertheless, expectations of immediate disturbances following upon Blum's downfall were belied, and a series of decrees including further devaluations of the franc saved the Government from bankruptcy.

#### *4. Hitler Causes Trouble Over Spain*

While the French political situation was still unsettled, Hitler launched his campaign against the Spanish Loyalist Government with the obvious intent to secure British and French acquiescence in the ultimate victory of Franco. He claimed that 'Spanish Bolshevik submarine pirates' had tried to sink the *Leipzig* in two torpedo attacks neither of which had actually hit or damaged the ship. The Loyalist Government later offered proof that the

whole affair was a German-Italian conspiracy, and even at the time there were enough elements of doubt about it to lead Great Britain and France to call for an investigation and to refuse participation in a naval demonstration against Valencia, as Germany demanded. Since the two Western Powers had thus failed to yield to Axis demands, as Hitler had apparently expected they would, both Germany and Italy again withdrew from the international patrol system, although they kept their ships in Spanish waters. They accompanied this action by statements emphasizing more than ever their determination to see Franco win. As a result, the air was tense and journalists once more began reporting that peace might be shattered by an incident.

In the face of the obvious Axis determination to disregard non-intervention, the British Government continued to speak optimistically of the situation, Chamberlain and Eden professing to believe that Germany had shown great restraint in the *Leipzig* affair and pointing out that Russia was supplying the Loyalists with war materials in large quantities. Meanwhile, the machinery of observation and control of Spanish sea and land frontiers continued to crumble. Germany and Italy rejected a plan by which Great Britain and France were to patrol the seas alone. Portugal withdrew facilities accorded to British observers on its frontiers, and in consequence of that action France showed an unexpected spirit by cancelling international observation of her Spanish border. Both the Axis Powers and General Franco early in July began pressing for his recognition as a belligerent, while reports spread that he was taking measures to insure the continued delivery of Basque iron ore to England and the uninterrupted operation of the British-owned Orconera Iron Ore Company. In view of Hitler's declaration of June 27 that he wanted a Nationalist victory in order to obtain Spanish iron ore, the intent behind Franco's moves was obvious, for he could ill-afford to alienate his staunchest backers in England. Behind these maneuvers lay Franco's need of further help, growing opposition to it within Italy, and heightened appreciation in both France and England of the danger of an Axis-supported Nationalist victory in Spain. Outstanding French Rightists like de Kerillis, who had previously raised a fund for a sword of honor to be presented to General Franco, were now bewailing the terrible menace to France of Italian and German activities in Spain. Eden on July 3 again saw fit to give warning that Great Britain's chief interest in Spain was to maintain its territorial integrity.



Even though Japan precipitated a crisis in the Far East early in July, thus distracting the attention of Russia, France, and Great Britain from the Spanish situation, the Axis Powers obviously did not feel themselves in a position to push matters further. Hitler had made a slight miscalculation if he thought the time ripe to isolate Loyalist Spain, to divide France from England, and to separate both from Russia. Accordingly, Germany and Italy acquiesced in a Non-Intervention Committee proposal to entrust the British Government with the task of reaching a compromise between the demand for recognition of Franco's belligerency and that for the withdrawal of all foreign volunteers from Spain. A British scheme, offered on July 14, provided for retention of observers on both land and sea to report breaches of the non-intervention pledges, the withdrawal of volunteers, and the recognition of belligerency when the process of withdrawal was working satisfactorily and when both sides in Spain had agreed to accept the Non-Intervention Committee's list of contraband articles and to refrain from molesting ships carrying neutral observers. While this plan was accepted in principle by everyone, its application was delayed for several months by the demand of Germany and Italy that belligerency of the Nationalists should be recognized before volunteers were withdrawn and the Russian refusal even to consider the question until every foreign volunteer had left Spanish soil.

### *5. Piracy and the Nyon Conference*

While this controversy was dragging on, another problem arose over the increasing menace of 'piracy' in the Mediterranean. In July ships bearing supplies for the Loyalists began to be attacked and sunk by 'unknown' submarines and airplanes. It was generally known, indeed, that the submarines were Italian, although only the Spanish Government and the U.S.S.R. ever pressed the charge home. Between July 27 and September 3, the attacks averaged one ship every two days and raised the fear, especially in France, that even naval communications in the Mediterranean might be seriously endangered. Early in August, the French Government announced that French merchantmen leaving North African ports would be guarded by naval vessels or airplanes. On August 17, the British Government gave warning that British ships were authorized to counter-attack any submarines that attacked them without warning. The lawlessness

of the attacks, which even extended to British naval vessels, roused the ire of many who had hitherto stood for appeasement of the Axis Powers and spurred the French and British Governments to take a really firm stand for the first time since the Spanish crisis had developed.

At French suggestion, London and Paris on September 6 invited all the Mediterranean and Black Sea Powers to a conference at Nyon to concert means of ending the piracy. Italy and Germany refused the invitation, allegedly because of a Soviet note of September 6 accusing Italy of responsibility for the attacks, and insisted that the matter should be handled by the Non-Intervention Committee. Since Great Britain took the view that this was a matter, not of the Spanish Civil War, but of naval security and international law, the Conference at Nyon met without the Axis Powers on September 10 and in record time concluded an agreement four days later. It provided for the formation of an anti-submarine patrol which was to attack and if possible destroy any submarine that attacked non-Spanish merchant ships in violation of international law. The British and French fleets were to patrol the Mediterranean and the lesser Powers their own territorial waters, while the patrol of the Tyrrhenian Sea was reserved for Italy if she chose to adhere to the agreement. In consequence of this agreement, France and England gave up the patrol of Spanish waters. Although the Nyon accord, widened on September 17 to include illegal attacks on shipping by aircraft or surface vessels, did not entirely stop all such acts, it did effectively put an end to the menace of submarine 'piracy.' Most important of all was the psychological effect of heartening those, especially the Russians, who had insisted all along that the proper way to handle the dictators was to oppose them firmly with collective decisions and action.

As a result of the new spirit of firmness, some notable attempts were made at the League of Nations Assembly to check the Italo-German intervention in Spain. Delbos intimated on September 18 at Geneva that should Italy attempt to answer the Nyon agreement by sending arms or reinforcements to Franco, France would be obliged to open her frontier for the benefit of the Loyalists. Premier Negrín of Spain asked that his Government be permitted to buy arms, that non-Spanish combatants be withdrawn, and that the Nyon accord be extended to include both Loyalist shipping and Loyalist participation in the patrol. While the League could not be expected to go as far as Negrín wished,

the political committee did pass a resolution which for the first time admitted that there were 'veritable foreign army corps on Spanish soil' which represented 'foreign intervention.' After expressing the hope that non-Spanish combatants could be immediately and completely withdrawn from Spain, the resolution declared that, if this was not accomplished, League members would consider ending the non-intervention policy. Such a declaration could scarcely pass the Assembly by the unanimous vote which was required to make it effective, but was supported by thirty-two members, who thus constituted an impressive majority.

Despite this new spirit and the object-lesson of Nyon, both France and Great Britain were too deeply committed to appeasement to give up that policy, especially in view of the ever-increasing complications in the Far East. They accordingly weakened the moral value of the action at Nyon by coming to an agreement with Italy on September 21 by which they admitted her to the anti-piracy patrol on a basis of parity with themselves after Mussolini had indignantly rejected the invitation to patrol the Tyrrhenian Sea because it did not befit the dignity of Italy as a Great Power. Furthermore, London and Paris, continuing their efforts to obtain the withdrawal of volunteers from Spain, attempted to draw Italy into tripartite discussions. Italy, however, insisted that the question should be reopened in the Non-Intervention Committee where Germany would also participate. By the time the chairman's sub-committee, a less unwieldy body than the whole committee, met on October 16 to open discussion, the effect of Nyon had pretty well worn off. The best that could be done was to gain in November the approval, but not yet the actual application, of the British scheme of July 14 for the withdrawal of non-Spanish combatants. The Committee modified the original plan to the extent of proposing to recognize Franco as a belligerent after a 'substantial' number of foreign soldiers had left Spain, and thus left the way open for fresh argument and bickering over what constituted a 'substantial' number.

Meanwhile, despite a successful Loyalist offensive west of Madrid in the summer of 1937, the Nationalist forces with their superior equipment continued slowly but inevitably to win battles for the greater strength and glory of Germany and Italy and the ultimate discomfiture of France, England, and their friends. Franco took Santander on August 25, the Asturian port of Gijón

on October 21, and at the same time raised the long siege of Oviedo. Despite the continuation of some guerrilla warfare, Franco had thus brought under his control the most valuable Spanish iron and coal mines and their shipping outlets. The bargaining power which this gave him was well demonstrated when in mid-November, about a month after he had annulled all transactions in mining property and mines, Great Britain arranged to exchange commercial agents with his Government. The Loyalist Government, which on October 25 had made Barcelona its capital in place of Valencia, protested this act because it implied an 'abandonment of the policy of abstaining from all official relations with those in revolt against a legally constituted government.' The British Government explained that the purpose of the exchange of agents was merely to protect their nationals and their economic interests and did not in any way constitute a recognition of General Franco's Government. Nevertheless, taken together with the continued open aid to Franco of Italy and Germany, the dilatoriness of the Non-Intervention Committee in dealing with foreign volunteers, and the inadequacy of the help to the Loyalists from Russia, the British action was disheartening to all who regarded a Loyalist victory as one condition for the survival of democracy in Europe.

#### *6. Chamberlain and the Rome-Berlin Axis*

Britain's policy in Spain was but part of the general appeasement pattern which Chamberlain was more and more eagerly weaving in the months after coming into office. The rebuff from Germany in June and the tension in the Mediterranean caused him to turn his attention again to Italy in the summer of 1937. Deciding to take a personal hand in bettering Anglo-Italian relations, Chamberlain had a long discussion on July 27 with Dino Grandi, Italian Ambassador in London. Whether or not this meeting was arranged upon Chamberlain's or Mussolini's initiative and whether or not Grandi delivered a friendly message from the Duce are still moot questions. Chamberlain addressed a friendly personal letter to Mussolini at the end of the month and received a reply that was described both in London and in Rome as emphasizing Il Duce's hope of improved Anglo-Italian relations. A good deal of mystery continued to surround the whole exchange, however, for the only official comment was that of Ciano, who on August 3 told foreign journalists little more

than that the 'Gentleman's Agreement' of January 2 was to remain in force, though certain factors not covered by that accord were 'left in the shadow,' and that the Chamberlain-Mussolini correspondence marked a 'new phase' in the relations between the two countries.

The consensus among journalists and commentators was that Chamberlain, whether or not he said so, was ready to recognize the Italian conquest of Ethiopia and to conclude a Four-Power Pact with Germany, Italy, and France. The German press, except for at least one suggestion that Mussolini had received Chamberlain's overture with reserve, professed pleasure over the exchange. Undoubtedly France viewed with uneasiness and Russia with resentment this good-fellowship between Chamberlain and the Duce, especially after the latter's speech at Palermo on August 20 which emphasized the necessity of recognizing the Italian Empire, the complete solidarity of the Rome-Berlin Axis, and Italian refusal to tolerate Bolshevism in the Mediterranean. There is reason to suspect, therefore, that both France and Russia, in calling for the conference at Nyon and in making it difficult for Germany and Italy to attend, were seeking to prevent an exclusive Anglo-Italian rapprochement which might tend to weaken the London-Paris Axis and to exclude Russia from Mediterranean affairs as Mussolini obviously desired to do.

The effort at Anglo-Italian rapprochement had been accompanied in August by a temporary tension between England and Germany over the expulsion from London of three German journalists and Berlin's retaliation by ousting Ebbutt of *The Times* from Germany. A renewed attempt at Anglo-German rapprochement, however, soon followed when Nevile Henderson not only attended the Nuremberg party rally which opened on September 7, but also persuaded the United States to send its *Chargé d'Affaires* in the absence of Ambassador Dodd. Considering this merry-go-round of alternating suspicion and friendliness and the threat implied in the Nyon negotiations, Mussolini undoubtedly felt that it was high time to renew his personal contacts with Hitler in order to be able to trumpet forth the unquestioning loyalty of the Rome-Berlin partners to each other.

Accordingly, Rome announced on September 3 that the long-delayed visit between Mussolini and Hitler would soon take place. Amid protestations of the Italian press that the visit meant peace and not aggression and that the Rome-Berlin Axis, far from seeking to be exclusive, welcomed collaboration with

other Powers, Mussolini started for Munich and Berlin on September 24, returning home on the twenty-ninth. As usual, the two professors of peace, Hitler and Mussolini, spent their time reviewing the military might of Germany and participating in a great theatrical mass meeting. At the May Field in Berlin the two pledged their eternal friendship, based upon the similarity of their respective revolutions, and repeated their oft-expressed determination to seek peace and to defend European civilization from Bolshevism. As for more practical matters, the dictators obviously agreed upon continued close cooperation with respect to Spain and determination to help Franco win, although the latter responsibility was still left largely upon Mussolini's shoulders. At the same time Hitler probably won confirmation of Mussolini's willingness to give him a free hand in Danubia and may have gained his Italian colleague's promise to join the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact.

Certainly one result of the meeting was Italy's refusal to discuss the withdrawal of volunteers from Spain without German participation. Another would seem to be an ending of Italian rapprochement with England, for, although it was rumored throughout September that far-reaching conversations would take place by the beginning of October, there were apparently none except those directly concerned with the question of volunteers in Spain. On the contrary, Mussolini resorted to one of his favorite devices in dealing with England — pressure of various kinds. Fresh reports were circulated of additional troops for Franco and of Italian plans for seizing Minorca, although the latter rumor proved to be untrue. Reinforcements for the Libyan garrisons began to leave Italy just before the Nyon Conference and others were reported at intervals up to the middle of October. The Italian press renewed its unhelpful attitude toward the British dilemma in Palestine where rioting again broke out in mid-October. Even Turkey was reported to be leaning away from England toward Italy when Premier İnönü was replaced in October by Bayar, who was credited with a desire to appease Mussolini. Finally Italy played in with Germany and Japan in the negotiations over the Far Eastern crisis of 1937.

### *7. The Far East — Another 'Sore Spot'*

Japan's attack upon China in the summer of 1937 began another series of crises in the Far East whose ups and downs tended

to parallel or to be closely related with the rise and fall of European tension. While the Russians had been insisting for two or three years before 1937 that this parallelism was a result of understandings among the Fascist Powers and Japan, it is more likely that the Japanese aggressions after 1931 formed a consistent pattern of imperialistic expansion, irrespective of happenings in Europe. In the spring of 1935, during the period of turmoil over German rearmament, Japan compelled China to grant concessions in North China and Manchoukuo. Again in the autumn, when the Ethiopian crisis was at its height, Japan, though failing to set up autonomous régimes in the Chinese northern provinces, secured an administration in Hopeh and Chahar which was less dependent upon the Chinese Government. At the time of the Rhineland coup in 1936, very strained relations developed between the U.S.S.R. and Japan as a result of the latter's aggressiveness toward Outer Mongolia and along the Russia-Manchoukuo frontier. In the latter half of the year the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact offered a basis for open cooperation in the future.

Among the Great Powers, the U.S.S.R. was the one most concerned over Japan's expansion and her announced determination to dominate the Far East at the expense of non-Asiatic Powers. Soviet territory half-circled the Japanese puppet state of Manchoukuo, and Russia's only valuable seaport in the Far East, Vladivostok, lay within easy bombing range of Tokyo, a fact that influenced both the Soviet attitude toward Japan and Japanese plans for self-defense. So fearful of Japan's westward push did Soviet Russia become that by a 'Gentleman's Agreement' with Outer Mongolia in November 1934 and a formal mutual-assistance treaty of March 1936, the U.S.S.R. sought to protect her own Siberian frontiers. Also as a further precaution against possible Japanese attack, the U.S.S.R. built fortifications along the Amur River, created an autonomous Far Eastern army, and sought to insure its supply by developing industrial projects in Siberia and by double-tracking the Trans-Siberian Railway. From the Soviet point of view, one of the most constant dangers was that of a two-front attack by Germany in the West and Japan in the East.

Among the democracies the only Power whose geographical relation to Japan in any way resembled Russia's was the United States, whose position in contrast with that of European Great Powers was described by Henry L. Stimson as 'adjacent' and as

that of a 'neighbor.' America had even more significant economic and financial ties with both China and Japan than had Russia, though they were not so great as those of Great Britain. The latter's interests in the Far East were chiefly political, strategic, and financial. Japanese expansion, if directed southward, might not only endanger Britain's huge investments there, her extremely large share in the carrying trade of China, her possessions at Hong Kong, Malaya, and Borneo, and eventually the Dominions of Australia and New Zealand, but also threaten her hold upon the Indian Ocean which is virtually a British lake, carrying in peacetime a quarter of Britain's total shipping. French interests in the Far East were perhaps the next most important. Besides Indo-China, one of the best-paying of all French colonies, France held concessions in several Chinese ports and a recognized though not legal sphere of influence in the South Chinese provinces of Kwangtung, Kwangsi, and Yunnan. French investments in China constituted five per cent of all French foreign investments.

In the years between the World Wars, Germany too had attempted to recoup something of her former position in the Far East. She met with especial success in China, attaining third place in the China trade by 1936, so that when Sino-Japanese hostilities broke out in 1937 she found herself in an anomalous position with respect to her anti-Comintern partner. German interests were far greater in China than in Japan, and in addition Germany had supplied China with military advisers. An effort was begun in 1936, however, to develop a triangular trade with Japan and Manchoukuo in order to obtain soya beans from the latter country. For two years, the German Government managed to maintain this three-cornered economic arrangement as a supplement to the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan and at the same time to retain her political and economic relations with China. On the whole, since German investments and other economic interest in the Far East were small in marked contrast with those of Great Britain, she was in a position to shift her policy whenever and however she pleased. The primary consideration was to use her political and economic links with Japan in such a way as to cause the utmost embarrassment to the U.S.S.R., Great Britain, and France at times when it would best help Germany to achieve her objectives in Europe.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed discussion of the interests of the Powers in the Far East, see Claude A. Buss, *War and Diplomacy in Eastern Asia* (New York, 1941).



In summary, it may be said that Russia, the United States, and Great Britain, because of their greater interests, were the natural leaders in dealing with crises that might arise, but that in the Far East as in Europe there was the same fatal lack of unity which gave an advantage to an aggressive Power capable of striking quickly. Moreover, in 1937, Japan could count upon American isolationism and British appeasement as well as British concern with tensions in the Mediterranean to prevent those two Powers from interfering. The only unknown factor was the Soviet attitude toward a Japanese attack upon China.

While there had been something of an improvement in Russo-Japanese relations during the spring of 1937, the Soviet desire to help China might have been expected to increase as a result of the decision of Chiang Kai-shek to make friends of the Communists and Japan's avowed ambition to eliminate Communism from Asia. The Japanese test of Russia's position took a form already made familiar by the tactics of both Powers in the Far East. Late in June, the Japanese army in Manchoukuo became involved with Soviet forces in a dispute over two islands in the Amur River to which each side laid claim. Although negotiations began immediately over the question, clashes occurred which resulted in the massing of large forces at the disputed point. The whole matter was settled, however, between Litvinov and the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow on July 3 with an agreement to withdraw military and naval forces from the islands whose ultimate sovereignty was to be discussed later. While the Russians attempted to represent the affair as a triumph for them, the Japanese army apparently assumed that the Soviet felt itself too weak to accept a Japanese military challenge. Therefore, they drew the conclusion that the Russian willingness to withdraw their forces from the Amur islands indicated that the Soviet would not attack Japan in case Japan should come to blows with China.

Four days after the settlement of the Amur River affair, Japanese troops maneuvering at the Marco Polo Bridge near Peiping clashed with Chinese soldiers. This incident proved to be the spark that set off the conflagration in China. The Japanese troops, heavily reinforced in the next few days, gained control of Tientsin and Peiping by the end of July. The Chinese attitude toward Japan's effort to gain control over the northern provinces was expressed by Chiang Kai-shek's declaration that despite China's inadequate preparations she would resist to the

death rather than yield any further territory. Since Japan could not now draw back and the Chinese would not yield, the war was bound to spread into the political and strategic centers farther south. After the second battle of Shanghai, which began on August 13, the Japanese army, pushing inland, succeeded by the end of 1937 in capturing the Chinese capital of Nanking and in overrunning much of the eastern part of China between the Yangtse River and the northern provinces. Thus, the operations in 1937 struck at a region where American and European interests were heavily concentrated. Furthermore, Japan adopted a stern attitude toward third parties, giving short shrift to Americans and Europeans in the battle zone.

Of the three most interested Great Powers, the U.S.S.R. had every reason to feel most directly menaced, for on July 27, Hirota, Japanese Foreign Minister, declared that the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany was now to be effectively applied and that there was to be a furtherance of intimate and friendly relations with the Reich. Russia's answer to these words and to anti-Soviet incidents in the fighting zone was the conclusion on August 21 of a five-year non-aggression pact with China. For the remainder of the year a number of pinpricks on the part of both Japan and Russia kept relations between them in such a state of strain that at one time Japan was reported to be sending two men to Manchoukuo for each one sent to China. The British Government was at first inclined to continue the policy of appeasing Japan that had been pursued in the spring of 1937. That Japan believed she had little to fear from Great Britain was indicated by her cavalier treatment of British officials and nationals in China. The truth of the matter was that Great Britain looked to the United States to take the lead in the Far East, adopting this attitude not merely because Britain was entangled at the moment in Europe, but also because she was embarking upon the general policy of seeking American co-operation that had apparently been urged at the Imperial Conference in June. In the United States a tug of war quickly developed between the Government, which wished to cooperate in opposing Japanese aggression in China, and public opinion, which remained isolationist. An early indication of the Government's attitude was a statement by Secretary Hull, issued on July 16, in the form of a summary of American aims that included such points as the maintenance of peace, abstinence from the use of force, non-interference in the internal affairs of other

nations, adjustment of international problems by peaceful means, faithful observance of international agreements, and advocacy of steps for the promotion of economic security and stability. Subsequent declarations and acts made it obvious that Roosevelt and Hull were attempting to steer a course between their own desire to take part in concerted action to restrain Japan and the public desire to avoid any risk of war.

Meanwhile, China was preparing an appeal to the League of Nations, finally presented on September 13, which requested action against Japan under Articles X, XI, and XVII of the Covenant. In order to bring the United States into the discussion, the League Assembly resurrected the Far Eastern Advisory Committee which had been set up in 1933 and on which an American representative had sat as an observer. On September 20, Secretary Hull announced that this country would resume limited cooperation in the Committee's discussions. The League's hopes of hearty American collaboration and even leadership seemed amply fulfilled when in a speech at Chicago on October 5, President Roosevelt made a forthright plea for American cooperation with other Powers in stopping the 'reign of terror and lawlessness' abroad in the world. He pointed out that America could not escape the consequences of this state of affairs, and declared: 'The peace, the freedom, and the security of 90 per cent of the population of the world are being jeopardized by the remaining 10 per cent who are threatening a breakdown of all international order and law.' He advocated that the epidemic of 'world lawlessness' should be quarantined and that America should assist in the preservation of peace. Encouraged by what seemed to be the President's willingness to take part in collective action, the League Assembly passed a resolution declaring that Japan had violated its treaty obligations and that League members, signatories and adherents of the Nine Power Pact,<sup>9</sup> together with additional states having special interest in the Orient should meet and discuss means of securing a peaceful settlement in the Far East. In order not to wound the susceptibilities of the United States and Germany, who were not members of the League, it was agreed that Belgium should invite the Powers to Brussels. Accordingly, eighteen states assembled there on November 3, but Japan and Germany refused to attend.

<sup>9</sup> In the Nine Power Pact, signed at Washington in 1922 by the United States, Belgium, the British Empire, China, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, and Portugal, the Powers promised to respect China's independence and territorial integrity, and to communicate with one another whenever a situation arose making discussion desirable.

The Brussels Conference was doomed to failure before it began, principally because public opinion in the United States would not support the President's Chicago declaration. The reported comments of one European statesman on the speech had proved to be true — 'another sermon on the Mount, Mount Blank.' The neutrality forces in the United States Senate and the people 'back home' rallied to oppose any steps that might bring risks of war. The retreat from the position taken by Roosevelt in the quarantine speech caused Great Britain, who was determined not to carry the onus of opposition to Japan alone, to draw back. In consequence, at the opening meeting of the Brussels Conference only China and the U.S.S.R. asked for firm steps against Japanese aggression; the majority of the delegates agreed with the American view that the Conference should attempt merely to bring about peace between Japan and China and to secure their cooperation on a fair basis. While the delegation of the United States really wanted to apply Hull's policy of July 16, its declaration was interpreted to mean that it was willing to make a deal by which Japan might be compelled to give up some of her aspirations, but would certainly escape punishment and perhaps retain something of her gains in Northern China. A third point of view at Brussels was that of the Axis Powers, represented by Italy whose delegate openly opposed any coercive measures against Japan and suggested that the Conference merely invite the warring parties to negotiate between themselves. Germany, in an effort outside the Conference to avoid choosing between Japan and China, offered her services as mediator. The result was a situation in which Germany on the one hand and the Brussels Conference on the other vied with each other for the honor of making a deal between China and Japan. It was made the more ridiculous by Japan's curt refusal to accept mediation from anyone. In the end, almost the only accomplishment of the Conference, which finally adjourned on November 24, was a resolution of November 15 mildly reprimanding Japan and condemning her armed intervention in China as illegal. Even this declaration was not voted upon by the Scandinavian nations. Tokyo was thus justified in disregarding and even laughing at the attitude of the Powers at the Conference.

The effect of the failure at Brussels was far-reaching, advertising as it did 'the timidity of the English-speaking Powers and the disillusionment of the Scandinavian States' in this attempt at collective action against aggressors.<sup>10</sup> Japan, of course, made

<sup>10</sup> *Survey of International Affairs, 1937*, I, 5-6.

the most of the situation and before the end of the year succeeded in easing the tension between herself and the three most interested Powers by dealing with one at a time. Not only did the failure to end the conflict in the Far East represent another defeat for those who advocated stiff resistance to the dictators; it also meant that another area of conflict in addition to that in Spain was to remain a source of vexation for the democratic and peaceful nations. Great Britain and France, already facing Germany in Western Europe and Italy in the Mediterranean, were now compelled to deal with a third threat to their interests. The U.S.S.R. was even more hampered in her freedom of movement by the heightened possibility of a two-front conflict.

#### *8. Consolidation of the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Bloc*

The implications of this situation were brought home by the further strengthening of the anti-Comintern front which could just as well have been called an anti-democratic front — had its true character been properly indicated. On November 6, Italy adhered to the German-Japanese Pact for obvious reasons of power politics rather than because of any deep-seated conviction of a Communist menace. Coming just after the opening of the Brussels Conference, the Italian move was widely interpreted as an Axis answer to the talk of united action by peace-loving nations. Virginio Gayda significantly declared: 'It is certain that, beside the Communist problem, Italy, Germany, and Japan will find in their solidarity other vast objects for collaboration.' Hitler himself, on November 9, concluded a reference to the 'great world-political triangle' by saying that it consisted 'of three states that are ready and determined to realize their rights and their vital interests.' One immediate result of the pact was Italy's formal recognition of Manchoukuo as an independent state on November 29, but the crowning touch to this consolidation of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo triangle was Italy's announcement on December 11 of her withdrawal from the League of Nations, even though this was of little practical significance since Italy had scarcely taken an active part in its work for two years. By this action the totalitarian triplice was united in its own world international, or Fascintern as it was beginning to be called, whose policies and methods differed from the League's far more than from the Comintern's.

The year 1937 thus drew to a close with the honors going to

the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Bloc. The three totalitarian states had not only created a more effective power combination than that of the democracies, but had also confounded their timorous opponents by frustrating all attempts at healing such open sores as the Spanish Civil War and the Sino-Japanese conflict. Except for the unexpected but short-lived spirit and vigor displayed at Nyon, the democracies had united only on doing nothing. The United States, through its neutrality legislation and overwhelmingly isolationist public opinion, had continued to give the dictators the green light signal. Great Britain with equal determination had kept to the course of appeasement and dragged France in her wake. The U.S.S.R., virtually isolated after so many vain attempts to win the other Powers over to a policy of collective action against aggressors, was already beginning to contemplate an appeasement policy of her own as the only means of preventing an ultimate attack. In fact, an atmosphere of pessimism and gloom pervaded the supporters of democracy and peace. In these circumstances Hitler found himself in an excellent position to capitalize on years of preparation by the annexation of Austria and, a little later, the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia.

## CHAPTER TEN

### THE END OF AUSTRIA

WHILE Hitler was alternately cajoling and annoying the Powers in the West, he was steadily pursuing the policy of extending German economic and political domination over Central and Southeastern Europe. Though both his aims and methods were clearly discernible by 1937, the efforts to combat them were obviously growing more feeble. The German drive southeastward was the logical outcome, not only of Nazi efforts to unite all Germans under the Third Reich, but also of Germany's domestic economy which was reaching the point where it required support from outside sources.

#### *1. German Economy and the Drang nach Osten*

By the end of 1936, when the much-advertised Four-Year Plan was launched, the Nazi Government had brought the economic life of Germany under control, but had not as yet satisfactorily solved the problem of financing increased expenditures in armament and public works, nor assured itself the necessary raw materials and foodstuffs. Although direct and indirect barter arrangements and the reduction of Germany's foreign debts from twenty-seven billion marks in 1930 to eleven or twelve billion at the end of 1936 had helped to reduce the strain on her exchange capacity, the holding of Reichsmarks in the Reichsbank had sunk from 2,705,000,000 in 1930 to 72,000,000 in 1936 and imports continued to exceed exports. In addition, it was estimated that by 1937 the German Government's internal short-term debt had reached figures somewhere between twenty-four and thirty-two billion marks, or six to eight billion dollars, and that it was steadily increasing. While industrial production and employment had both risen greatly, the agricultural situation was far from satisfactory; real wages were actually declining, and the number of people who applied for winter help in 1936-37 was officially stated to be 12,500,000, although some estimates put it as high as 15,000,000. Furthermore, Germany's economic

reconstruction had been very one-sided. While streets and roads had been built up, railways and waterways had deteriorated. Many industries in order to keep up the pace demanded of them had been compelled to utilize *ersatz* materials, a practice which resulted in further exploitation of such German natural resources as foodstuffs and timber. In the circumstances some observers at the end of 1937 wondered how long German economy could stand the strain and suggested that 'perhaps the German Government believes that when the day comes, it will succeed in making others pay.'<sup>1</sup>

This, indeed, was the ultimate outcome of the 'vampire economy,' but Goering, director of the Four-Year Plan, and his fellow Nazis had other aims in mind than an interim solution of Germany's dilemma of ever-increasing expenditure in preparation for war and ever-declining resources in money and raw materials. Far from dreaming that Germany could achieve complete autarchy, despite the tightening of belts and the sacrifice of butter for cannon, they envisaged the development of a *Grossraumwirtschaft* (great regional economy) in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, where Germany would play the rôle of the industrial and financial leader and the non-German peoples would supply the raw materials and foodstuffs. Such other backward industrial regions as Spain, the Far East, and South America had already been exploited by barter arrangements for trade. While the vociferous cry for colonies was raised as another way out of Germany's economic difficulties, the real aim was a continental empire in Europe that could not be cut off from Germany by superior naval forces in time of war.

This objective and the choice of the region in which it was to be pursued were ideas not newly conceived by the National Socialists. They were taken over from the pan-Germanic imperialism of the nineteenth century and World War days that had seemed to be in process of realization when the Treaties of Brest-Litovsk with Russia and of Bucharest with Rumania were signed early in 1918. Hitler himself bore witness in *Mein Kampf* to the deeply rooted Nazi acceptance of this *Drang nach Osten* as the legitimate and practicable aim of German foreign policy. In this perspective the acquisition of Austria and the humbling

<sup>1</sup> W. G. J. Knop, 'Behind the Nazi Façade,' *Living Age*, April 1938, p. 114 (reprinted, pp. 110-16, from the *London Banker*). See also John C. de Wilde, 'The German Economic Dilemma,' *Foreign Policy Reports*, XIII (1937-38), 1-16, and 'Germany's Controlled Economy,' *ibid.*, XIV (1938-39), 289-304.



of Czechoslovakia were but preliminary steps to economic and political domination of regions beyond — Ukraine to the east, Danubia and the Balkans to the southeast. The Nazi planners, however, preferred a peaceful conquest of their living space. This was to be accomplished by invoking the liberal doctrine of the right of self-determination in the case of the Germans in Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, and by following up economic ties in other lands with intervention in their turbid domestic politics. However, Germany did not find the way easy in 1937.

It is true that by the end of 1936 Germany had succeeded in far outdistancing other Great Powers in the commerce of South-eastern Europe, having won from 16 per cent, in the case of Austria, to about 55 per cent in that of Bulgaria, of each country's total foreign trade. The value of Germany's share of trade with the Danubian states alone was about 27 per cent greater than that of Great Britain, Italy, and France combined. During 1937, however, Germany ran into many difficulties. World-wide economic recovery had provided the opening of new markets for Danubian and Balkan products, the disposal of which during the depression had depended upon German absorption. The German barter system had resulted in surplus credits in Berlin which it was difficult to liquidate in the absence of foreign exchange. The little countries of the region had become increasingly reluctant to jeopardize their political future by tying themselves up too closely with German economy. As a result of these factors, Germany's share of Central and Southeastern European trade diminished in 1937 with respect to every country except Hungary and Yugoslavia where it was increased but slightly.

Another discouraging element in the situation was the fact that, whereas trade with the same regions before 1914 had constituted 14 per cent of Germany's total foreign commerce, it was now much smaller. In spite of all the Nazi efforts since 1932, the Danubian and Balkan share of German exports had been raised only from 3.5 to 9.4 per cent, and of German imports from 5 to 10.5 per cent. Although the increases were very great, they were not enough and had not yet come to equal Germany's pre-1914 figures.<sup>2</sup> If the region were ever going to contribute its maximum

<sup>2</sup> For the figures given above, see John C. de Wilde, 'German Trade Drive in Southeastern Europe,' *Foreign Policy Reports*, XII (1936-37), 213-20; Stoyan Pribichevich, 'The Nazi Drive to the East,' *ibid.*, XIV (1938-39), 173-84; *Bulletin of International News*, XIII (1936-37), 566; *ibid.*, XV (1938), 328; and *New York Times*, May 16, 1937, Sect. 4, p. 4.

share of the raw materials and foodstuffs that Germany required, production would need to be increased and communications with Germany improved. That could only be done if Germany could eliminate the opposition among the small states and the competition of the large ones; and if, indeed, some of Germany's own totalitarian methods applied with German aid and counsel could be introduced. In Germany's favor, meanwhile, was the fact that, since Germany's opponents worked singly, or at best through bilateral negotiations, their efforts often crossed out one another's to the ultimate advantage of the Nazi cause.

## *2. Danubian Pawns and Great Powers*

It was clear by 1937 that the key states in Central Europe whose future would determine the success or failure of the German drive to the Southeast were Austria and Czechoslovakia. They had to stand or fall together because the German annexation of either one, situated geographically as they were in relation to one another and to Germany, would mean the impotence if not the eventual annexation of the other. Austria's position, however, was far more precarious in 1937 than Czechoslovakia's.

After the 1936 accord with Germany, the Austrian Nazis became increasingly bold. Their ranks were swelled in October by disgruntled *Heimwehr* men whose organization was disbanded by Schuschnigg and ordered to join the Fatherland Front. Furthermore, the Chancellor was compelled to amnesty some eighteen thousand Nazis who had been held in concentration camps and to make a Nazi sympathizer, Neustaedter-Stuermer, his Minister of Public Security. Nevertheless, a few days after Schuschnigg's Assistant Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Guido Schmidt, had returned from a visit to Berlin with enthusiasm for the Third Reich and Goering had announced that 'Heil Hitler' would soon be the national Austrian greeting, Schuschnigg retorted in a speech on November 26 that the three internal enemies of Austria in their order of importance were Communism, Nazism, and Pessimism. The Nazis drew little consolation for this slap in the face from a long-delayed Austro-German commercial treaty that was signed in January 1937. The plucky Schuschnigg continued the fight against the Nazis when in February he revived talk of Hapsburg restoration in Austria as an alternative to *Anschluss*. This caused Neurath to come post-haste to Vienna on February

22-23 in order to protest against restoration and to forward the work of coordinating Austrian and German policy. However, he succeeded in getting little more than the establishment of an Austro-German Cultural Affairs Committee from Schuschnigg, who was nevertheless upset by the bold Nazi demonstrations of welcome accorded the German Foreign Minister and the pro-Nazi sympathies of members of his own Government. Furthermore, Mussolini, who had formerly been complacent about Hapsburg restoration, now demonstrated his subservience to Germany by indicating through a newspaper article that he would oppose it.

Despite the disapproval of both Germany and Italy, Schuschnigg kept to his chosen course. He redoubled his efforts to control the Austrian Nazis by refusing concessions to them, arresting demonstrators, and dismissing Neustaedter-Stuermer from his post on March 20. Likewise, he permitted the press to continue its discussion of restoration, to criticize German and Italian foreign policy, to praise French and British rearmament, and to advocate the cooperation of Austria and Hungary with the Little Entente. As the year advanced, relations with Italy became less cordial and those with Germany, while correct and even marked by a slight *détente* in July, were never on a satisfactory basis. It was in such circumstances that Schuschnigg attempted to promote a Danubian Entente and better relations with Czechoslovakia.

Czechoslovakia remained outwardly confident throughout 1937 that her domestic and foreign policies were sound and successful. Her increased industrial production, almost reaching the 1929 level, and her heavy armament program greatly improved domestic economic conditions. This, in addition to the promise of concessions to the German minority, was expected ultimately to destroy Henlein's pro-Nazi Sudeten German Party. Furthermore, Czechoslovakia hoped to strengthen her international position by some solution of the Teschen controversy with Poland, by a strengthening of the Little Entente through mutual-assistance pacts to which France would be a party, and by the elimination of such causes of division in Southeastern Europe as Bulgar-Rumanian ill-feeling and Yugoslav-Soviet antipathy. Czech statesmen also remained most anxious to create the Danubian Bloc that they had advocated for more than a year.

The dream of Danubian accord, however, was actually farther from realization than ever. Had the Rome Protocol states on the

one hand and the Little Entente on the other constituted harmonious units, they might have been able to get together. But Hungary, although she had been disappointed in the expected support from Italy and Germany of her revisionism and also feared the Nazi activities within her own borders, could not overcome her prejudices against her neighbors sufficiently to cooperate cordially with Austria in working for Danubian union. While neither of Czechoslovakia's allies had any desire to break up the Little and Balkan Ententes, they were too intent upon pursuing a balancing policy to take the risks of involving themselves with Germany by signing new pacts, or to make the necessary concessions to Austria and Hungary. Rumania was encouraged in her position by Poland who also sought to draw Hungary into a bloc of neutrals. Yugoslavia, after signing a laudable treaty of friendship with Bulgaria in January 1937, made a neutrality and trade treaty with Italy on March 25 which caused grave anxiety concerning her loyalty to former allies and friends. But these were not the only stumbling-blocks in the way of Danubian accord, for its realization depended in the last analysis, not upon the little nations, but upon the policies of Germany, Italy, France, and Great Britain, who were either opposed or indifferent to a self-reliant and independent Danubia.

Hitler had obviously become alarmed in the spring of 1937 by the trend toward a Danubian Bloc and by the independence of Schuschnigg. The Fuehrer lectured the statesmen of Central Europe whenever they appeared at Berlin upon the rewards of a pro-German orientation and the dangers of an anti-German policy. In June he sent Neurath on a tour of the Hungarian, Bulgar, and Yugoslav capitals in order to prevent the formation of a Danubian accord and perhaps to promote a bloc tied to German economy. Although Neurath's efforts did not bear immediate fruit, they may well have helped to prevent the conclusion of an economic agreement between Hungary and the Little Entente. Hitler's greatest problem, however, was to keep Great Britain and France out of his *Lebensraum* and to persuade Mussolini to withdraw. To work out this threefold plan he used Spain as the principal lever, although his most powerful argument with Britain and France was the prospect of peace in the West if they kept out of the East.

Meanwhile, Mussolini, subjected as he had been to the step-by-step methods of Nazi diplomacy, found himself in 1937 rapidly yielding ground that he had never intended to give up

when the Rome-Berlin Axis was created in October 1936. By the latter part of April, the expense of pacifying Ethiopia and his involvement in Spain had weakened his position on the Brenner Pass to the point where he could no longer resist the Nazi desire for an exclusive foothold in Austria. When Schuschnigg visited Mussolini in Venice, April 22-23, the Duce was still reluctant to admit that he had swallowed completely the Nazi hook, so cleverly baited with Spain, but his son-in-law Ciano was brutally frank in telling the Austrian Chancellor that he had better make his peace with Hitler, even at the price of admitting Nazis to his Cabinet.<sup>3</sup> Goering, who was in Italy at the same time, and Neurath, who visited Rome on May 4-5, kept Mussolini on the Spanish line, although they still probably promised him in return that Germany would not annex Austria outright. It is doubtful if Mussolini, even after the September visit to Berlin and as late as the end of the year, had given up hope that Hitler would continue to respect Austria's nominal independence, but the Duce had certainly come to realize that he could no longer exert any preponderant influence in the Danubian Valley. Italy's admission to Hungary and Austria in November that she could not maintain the Rome Protocol preference rates on their goods and her talk of giving Germany a larger share in the economic development of the Danubian Basin were proof of that. Even though Austria and Hungary agreed to recognize Franco, their failure at the meeting of the Rome Protocol states in Budapest on January 12, 1938, to follow Italy out of the League or to join the Anti-Comintern Bloc indicated that they understood Italy's impotence. Apparently, however, neither London nor Paris fully appreciated Italian weakness in Central Europe until the very eve of *Anschluss*.

British and French protestations of good-will toward the Danubian states, upon which some of them and especially Czechoslovakia based high hope of support in resisting Nazi pressure, were bound to prove worthless unless some definite attempt were made to back up the words with deeds. England's position, however, was quite different from that of France with respect to Eastern Europe. Great Britain had never in her whole history exerted other than an indirect influence on the European Continent beyond the reach of her naval guns. Furthermore, the

<sup>3</sup> For slightly conflicting accounts of the meeting, see Martin Fuchs, *Showdown in Vienna* (New York, 1939), pp. 148-50; and G. E. R. Gedy, *Betrayal in Central Europe* (New York and London, 1939), pp. 200-01.

only way in which she could do that was through some such organization of collective security as the League of Nations or a system of alliances and alignments. Since the League was dead, Anglo-Italian relations still tense, and the British Government fearful of close collaboration with the U.S.S.R., a conservative like Chamberlain had every reason to hesitate before committing his country to active intervention in Central Europe. France, on the other hand, still had her alliances with Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Soviet Russia, and her treaties of friendship with Rumania and Yugoslavia which had been designed to reinsure her against German aggression. The French Government throughout 1937 insisted upon her loyalty to Poland and Czechoslovakia from whom she received cordial responses. Toward the end of May, Litvinov, Blum, and Delbos announced that the Franco-Soviet Treaty was still binding, although none of them made any move to implement the pledge of mutual aid by staff talks. While neither Rumania nor Yugoslavia would agree to mutual-assistance pacts with France, Premier Stoyadinovich, on a trip to Paris, October 12, renewed the French-Yugoslav treaty of friendship that had first been signed in 1927, and the Rumanian Government continued to protest its loyalty to France. The French felt too weak, however, to risk war for their Eastern allies without the certainty of British backing. Then, too, by the end of 1937 the Spanish and Chinese crises made both Powers more than ever reluctant to face new complications in Europe, although they were well aware of Germany's persistent drive to the southeast.

While all these factors in the situation were already becoming apparent when Chamberlain made his first German appeasement move in June, they were glaringly obvious in November when he made his second. For that reason the Halifax mission to Germany and the subsequent Anglo-French talks assumed greater significance for Eastern European affairs than for Western, although they were but a part of that general situation brought about by the strengthening of the totalitarian states and the ineffectiveness of the democratic and peaceable nations. There was another reason, too, why the appeasement move of November had a more direct interest than that of June for Central and Southeastern Europe. That was the fact that Chamberlain, in inaugurating his drive for a general European settlement in his Guildhall speech of November 9, included Italy as well as Germany in his invitation to friendly negotiations. For some

reason, however, Ciano's immediate response was not acted upon. This may have been due to a split between Chamberlain and Eden over the method of handling Italy, but it may also have been the result of a feeling held in both London and Paris that they could rely upon Mussolini because of Italian interests to oppose Hitler's drive southeastward, and that therefore in good time Mussolini would be compelled to bargain with them on much more favorable terms. If that were true, they miscalculated the speed with which Hitler would work and the weakness of Mussolini.

An invitation to Lord Halifax from Goering to attend the International Game Exhibition at Berlin offered Chamberlain an excuse for sending his Lord President of the Council to Germany, November 17-21. This choice of an envoy outside the Foreign Office and diplomatic personnel gave rise to reports of a rift between the upholders of collective security and the appeasement clique led by Chamberlain, Simon, and Hoare. Advocacy in the so-called 'Cliveden' press, *The Times*, and *The Observer*, of a deal with Germany by which she would renounce her claims to colonies in return for a free hand in Austria and Czechoslovakia was taken as an indication of the line of discussion to be adopted by Halifax in whom the pro-Germans like Lord Lothian and the Astors were reported to have had much confidence. On the other hand, Labor was also reported to have been in favor of the Halifax visit because it hoped that he might win Hitler's promise to renounce the use of force. Moreover, Eden, who was credited with retaining his view as expressed in public speeches that Great Britain could not disinterest herself in Central Europe, drew up Halifax's instructions. With such conflicting views and motives in the background of the Halifax mission, it is difficult to determine exactly what Chamberlain hoped to accomplish by it. Mere exploration of Germany's views was scarcely necessary, for Nevile Henderson had already discovered them in talks with Neurath and Goering at the Nuremberg party rally in September and at Goering's Rominten hunting lodge in October. The German Foreign Minister had declared that Austria was the 'first and last' of German's objectives, and that the Sudeten German problem in Czechoslovakia could be settled by compromise, if the Czechs would 'leave the Russian orbit and give true equality to their German subjects.' At Rominten, Goering had stated that Germany would recognize Great Britain's position overseas if Great Britain would recognize

the continental position of Germany in Europe and would not undertake to hinder her legitimate expansion.

In the light of these revelations it is fairly certain that Halifax's German hosts discussed the prospect of Anglo-German collaboration, perhaps even an alliance, if Great Britain would not oppose Germany's continental aspirations. In addition, German press articles and speeches indicated that they were willing to suspend claims to colonies for six years and to rejoin the League of Nations, if the war-guilt clause of Versailles and the sanctions articles of the Covenant were abolished. Exactly what Halifax said when he talked with Goering, Hitler, Neurath, Blomberg, and Goebbels is not known. He probably did not make any promises to Germany of a free hand in dealing with Austria and Czechoslovakia, as many critics of appeasement alleged, but he certainly did not give Hitler the impression that Great Britain would oppose him by force. He undoubtedly stressed British desire for peaceful rather than violent revision and was reassured on this point by Hitler. Moreover, he renewed the invitation to von Neurath to visit London, and procured from Goebbels some amelioration of the critical attitude of the German press toward Britain. Beyond this he apparently achieved no concrete results from his visit.

Meanwhile, the French were becoming increasingly alarmed over the general situation. Their suspicion of the British appeasement policy and fear that French interests were being jeopardized as a result of it caused the Government to consider breaking away from British leading-strings. Nevertheless, the joint communiqué issued on November 30, after Chautemps and Delbos had met Chamberlain, Eden, and Halifax in London, indicated that they had agreed not to disagree. The communiqué mentioned the Halifax mission as 'well calculated to improve the atmosphere'; it expressed the desire of France and Britain 'to cooperate with all countries in the common task of promoting international appeasement by methods of free and peaceful negotiations'; and it declared that the subject of colonies required 'much more extended study.' But if the French statesmen wanted Great Britain to join with them in giving guarantees to Czechoslovakia and Austria against German attack, as it was rumored they did, they were certainly disappointed, for the Chamberlain Government would only go so far as to express a common interest with France 'in the maintenance of peaceful conditions' in Central Europe and to approve the forthcoming visit of Delbos to Poland and to the Little Entente countries.



With such a vague statement behind him, and with the appeasement press in England and France — even including one outstanding paper of his own Radical Socialist Party — declaring that Germany should be given a free hand in Eastern Europe, Delbos might have used his time and money to better purpose than for his East European tour of December 2–19. Nevertheless, he visited Warsaw, Bucharest, Belgrade, and Prague only to discover that, though the Governments in the first three capitals were correct, even cordial, in their expressions of regard for France, they could not be relied upon to risk a conflict with Germany over either Czechoslovakia or Austria, and that the peoples were much more hearty in their feeling of friendship for France than their rulers, except in Prague, where Government and people alike were genuinely anxious to maintain the alliance. It is little wonder that Delbos returned to Paris discouraged over the situation in Central Europe and convinced that Austria, at least, was doomed.<sup>4</sup>

### 3. *Hitler's Plans for Anschluss*

It is certain that by December 1937, Hitler had decided upon *Anschluss* by one means or another within the next few months. Whether he was pushed into such a step by economic, political, or personal considerations, the general reasons why he made this decision are not hard to find. Since the League of Nations as an instrument of collective security was now rarely mentioned, diplomacy was back on the level of secret and bilateral discussions in which the timidity and the traditionalist view of limited liability among the appeasers in both Great Britain and France gave Hitler virtual assurance that they would not intervene. Events in the Far East were keeping the U.S.S.R. preoccupied, while Spain continued to engross the attention of Italy. In addition to these favorable circumstances there were special reasons for Hitler's choosing to attack Austria rather than Czechoslovakia. Both, to be sure, held Germans whose allegedly unhappy lot was being played up in the German press and in Nazi leaders' speeches throughout the summer and autumn. For a time, especially in October and early November when Henlein demanded autonomy for the Sudeten Germans in place of the promised reforms and when frontier incidents and a German-Czech press

<sup>4</sup> Compare the conflicting reports in Fuchs, *Showdown in Vienna*, pp. 129–33; and Robert Machray, *Struggle for the Danube* (London, 1938), pp. 294–96.

war brought relations to a high point of tension, it looked as if Hitler was preparing to attack the Czechs first. He played his usual double-crossing game when he made offers at least to Hungary and Austria to divide the Republic with them, while at the same time he proposed to the Czechoslovak Government a non-aggression pact if it would break its ties with Soviet Russia and France. But in the end Hitler decided to get Austria first, for it would cause less trouble. All the Austrians instead of a mere minority were Germans. Furthermore, Hitler could intimidate or attack Czechoslovakia more easily once its Bohemian portion were all but surrounded by a Germany expanded by the incorporation of Austria. Finally Schuschnigg had proved that he was not to be cajoled into a gradual Nazification of Austria, but on the contrary that he was redoubling his efforts to bring about a Hapsburg restoration and that he might even consider a rapprochement with the workers. Therefore, he had to be crushed one way or another.

Hitler intended to do this by means of fifth columnists within Austria, augmented and aided by Nazi agents from the Reich who began to appear in Vienna early in January. These forces were to foment disorders that would produce a crisis which would give the Reich an excuse to march into the country in the guise of a big brother compelled to look after his little sister's affairs. This was the concept behind the so-called Tavs plot which was discovered by the Austrian police in mid-January, but whose details were never published because, apparently, they would have revealed the complicity of such big men as Rudolf Hess and even some highly placed Austrians.<sup>5</sup> Also Schuschnigg might well have calculated that he would hold the documents seized by the police as a weapon against Hitler. If he did think that, he gravely misjudged his opponent, for in the end Hitler not only felt no compunctions about plotting his German brother's downfall, but actually followed much the same procedure as that described in the Tavs documents. The discovery of the plot and the opposition of Hitler's own army men, however, caused a slight delay and some minor changes in tactics.

The first outward sign that all was not well in the Third Reich was the sudden postponement of Hitler's scheduled Reichstag speech of January 30. The next came with the announcement

<sup>5</sup> For conflicting accounts of the Tavs plot, see Fuchs, *Showdown in Vienna*, pp. 171-78; Gedye, *Betrayal in Central Europe*, pp. 208-09; and M. W. Fodor, 'Finis Austriae,' *Foreign Affairs*, XVI (July 1938), 589-91.

of major changes in the army and the Government on February 4. The immediate cause of this shake-up was probably the opposition of the Chief of Staff, General Werner von Fritsch, to Hitler's plans for the seizure of Austria. Fritsch, who had never concealed his dislike and contempt for the Nazis, wanted to respect the independence of Austria, not only because he had an agreement with the Austrian Chief of Staff to do so, but also because he felt that Germany was unprepared to take the risk of an armed conflict, and because he thought an independent Austria would ultimately be more useful to Germany than one incorporated into the Reich which would thereby extend the frontiers to be defended. Behind such objections to Hitler's aims in Austria lay the long record of *Reichswehr* obstruction and criticism of Hitler's domestic and foreign policies. The conservative *Reichswehr*, basing its views of foreign affairs on technical data, had not appreciated as Hitler did the appeasement spirit in England and France, nor the instability of anti-German forces in Eastern and Central Europe. The immediate occasion for the February housecleaning was the scandal connected with the marriage of General von Blomberg to a lady of easy virtue which caused the *Reichswehr* to demand his dismissal from the War Ministry and threw Hitler into a fit of temper.

On February 4, the 'resignations' of Blomberg and Fritsch because of 'ill-health' and the retirement of seven other army generals and six air force generals were announced. The following new arrangements were made: Hitler assumed 'direct command over the entire army establishment' with General Keitel as the technical successor of Blomberg, but in reality as an assistant to Hitler in command of all armed forces; General Walther von Brauchitsch became Commander-in-Chief of the army, a post which Goering had apparently coveted, but instead of which he had been given the title of Marshal; Ribbentrop was recalled from London to become Minister of Foreign Affairs while Neurath was made chairman of a secret advisory cabinet council on foreign affairs whose other members were Ribbentrop, Goering, Goebbels, Hess, Brauchitsch, Admiral Raeder, General Keitel, and the chief of the Reich Chancellery, Dr. H. H. Lammers; and, finally, Walther Funk became Minister of Economics to fill the vacancy left by Schacht's resignation the previous November. All this amounted to a consolidation of the army and Government in Hitler's hands, with all his subordinates either willing collaborators, as in the case of the army, or tried

and trusted Nazis. The world wondered what this purge, which in the following weeks extended downward in the ranks of the army and the civil and foreign service, portended, but had not long to wait, for within a week Hitler had summoned Schuschnigg to Berchtesgaden.

#### *4. Schuschnigg on the Anvil*

It would appear that both von Papen, who had been formally recalled from his Vienna post on February 4, and Guido Schmidt were responsible for persuading Schuschnigg to meet the Fuehrer. They may have encouraged the Austrian Chancellor to believe that, with the documents on the Tavs plot in his hands, he would have a trump card over Hitler who was represented as ignorant of his subordinates' plots. It is alleged that Schuschnigg did not make his decision until he had telephoned Mussolini for advice and had received the Sibylline reply that the Duce had complete confidence in his statesmanship. There is also a story that Schuschnigg begged Paris and London to promise their support, but this was denied by Eden. Whatever the preparations for bearding the lion in his Berchtesgaden den, Schuschnigg's press bureau represented the coming visit as in complete accord with the spirit and letter of the 1936 Agreement. If Schuschnigg really believed that to be the case, he was rudely awakened upon arrival at the Fuehrer's mountain retreat. Not only did Hitler treat him as if he were a traitor to the Austro-German Treaty, and lay before him the plans for the invasion of Austria, but he made demands for changes in the Austrian Cabinet that signified his intention of completely coordinating Austria with the Reich. Schuschnigg refused to give any pledges on the plea that he had no constitutional power to do so, but seems to have extracted one last promise from Hitler that the independence of Austria would be respected if his demands were granted.

Schuschnigg returned to a dazed Vienna, where in the absence of precise information all sorts of rumors were circulating while stocks were going down and the confidence of the Austrian Nazis was steadily rising. President Miklas apparently wished to refuse Hitler's demands, but after an all-night session on February 15-16 and after Schuschnigg unsuccessfully attempted to get into touch with Mussolini, who at this crucial moment was reported to be ski-ing or perhaps at his country place out of reach of telephone, the President and Chancellor gave in. Arthur von

Seyss-Inquart, whose name might easily have become the synonym of fifth columnists in place of Quisling's had it not been so awkward, was appointed Minister of Interior and of Public Security. Thus, he was given control of the police. Schmidt became Foreign Minister; another pro-Nazi was made Minister of Justice; and three more were admitted to the Cabinet. In addition, the Government proclaimed an amnesty for those who had committed political offenses before February 15 if they continued to remain in the country, and opened the Fatherland Front to individual National Socialists. The significance of putting law enforcement into the hands of pro-Nazis and of admitting men who were determined to end Austrian independence into the organization designed to defend it was clear. 'Cold *Anschluss*' many called it. Furthermore, Seyss-Inquart's first act in office was a trip to Berlin, where he talked with Hitler, Goering, and the head of the Gestapo, Himmler, about the next steps to be taken in Austria. Henceforth there were two heads of the Austrian Government, Hitler and Schuschnigg, neither of whom, it soon appeared, was willing to give in to the other.

Hitler in his long-awaited Reichstag speech of February 20, amid his statistics of German economic progress, his demand for colonies, his gibes at Great Britain and especially Eden, his protestations of friendship for everyone except Soviet Russia, and his disclaimers of a desire for Spanish or French territory, found time to mention Austria only briefly. He promised to protect the 'ten million Germans' beyond the frontiers of the Reich, and since there were about seven million in Austria, this utterance seemed to apply also to those in Czechoslovakia. More directly he referred to the Berchtesgaden meeting as a development within the framework of the 1936 Agreement toward a 'better understanding between the two states through closer and friendlier relations in the various spheres of cultural, political, and economic cooperation.' He declared that the Reich and Austria were bound together by 'long communal history and culture.' His paying of 'tribute' to the Austrian Chancellor for cooperation in finding a solution of Austro-German difficulties, which was, Hitler asserted, 'just as much in the interests of both countries as in that of the entire German people,' did not compensate Schuschnigg for the Fuehrer's failure to declare, as he had usually done, that he would respect the integrity and independence of Austria.

In Austria hope of independence sank to a new low, not merely

because of what Hitler had left unsaid, but also because measures of defense against Nazi activities issued by Schuschnigg were being counteracted by the words and acts of Seyss-Inquart. Nevertheless, the Chancellor, far from surrendering, gave the most stirring speech of his career before the legislative bodies on February 24. From beginning to end the keynote of his oration was, to use his own concluding words: 'Until death: Red-White-Red! Austria!' Throughout his speech in which he recounted the economic progress of his country, the relations with Germany, the promises of Hitler, the mission of Austria, he appealed to his countrymen to unite in the belief and knowledge of the 'immortality' of their country. He appealed to the workers as well as other classes to concentrate upon winning the victory for an independent Austria that he asserted was beyond doubt. His words for the first time struck through the mechanical Fatherland Front to the hearts of his countrymen, giving them new hope and new confidence.

Schuschnigg only a few weeks before had written in his book *Dreimal Oesterreich* that the essence of his country's characteristics lay in the 'gift of avoiding hard corners, of reconciling opposites, of purveying German spirit and culture to the world in such a wise as to win from the world not only positive and respectful admiration, but also love and personal sympathy.' Continuing he had declared: 'That is and remains the mission of the Austrian, who now as much as ever, as standard bearer of his race, stands on the bridge which connects differing cultures.'<sup>6</sup> He had been thinking, as Austrians had thought for centuries, of the bridge between Western and Eastern Europe and between Teutonic and Latin Europe, but now on February 24 he was standing on a different bridge — that between the old Austrian way of life and Nazism. The crucial question for him and for Austria was whether or not he would be left standing alone. If so, he would go down valiantly fighting for his Austrian and Catholic faith, but inevitably he would go down.

Within Austria the legacy of February 1934 was admittedly a handicap to Schuschnigg. Moreover, his legitimist and clericalist sympathies not only continued to keep him separated from the workers, but also alienated the young radicals who regarded Nazism as a progressive movement in contrast with the Chancellor's conservatism. Finally, the divided authority within the

<sup>6</sup> From the translation, *My Austria* (New York, 1938), pp. 304–05. For the speech of February 24, *ibid.*, pp. 311–42.

Government after February 16 operated to permit and foster the development of the Nazi fifth column: German 'commercial travelers' and 'students' crowded into Austrian cities; Nazis joined the Fatherland Front in groups; Graz, Linz, Klagenfurt, and other provincial cities witnessed open demonstrations at which Seyss-Inquart appeared ostensibly to 'pacify' the agitators, but actually to review uniformed, swastika-bedecked, heiling Nazi marchers with whom he exchanged salutes, thus increasing rather than diminishing their ardor. Nevertheless, Schuschnigg began negotiating with the workers with some hope of success. Adding them to the ranks of legitimists, clericals, and Jews, it was estimated that in any free vote on the question of independence, he would have at least 65 per cent and perhaps as high as 80 per cent of the Austrian people behind him. But after all, there were ten times as many Reich Germans as Austrians, and therefore the ultimate outcome of the struggle for Austria's independence was not in her hands. This Goering made clear in a speech of March 1 in which he stated that the Fuehrer's words about the ten million 'oppressed' Germans beyond the borders would be backed by force, if need be, 'to the limit.'

Among the neighbors of the little state, none could help her. Hungary did not like the prospect of finding herself smack up against the German frontier, but her military position was even weaker than Austria's. Czechoslovakia was most alarmed over the situation, but was fearful of moving without support. Her Little Entente allies had never been willing to pledge aid against Germany. Yugoslavia was more fearful of legitimism than of *Anschluss* and Premier Stoyadinovich may well have been 'softened' toward Germany when he visited Berlin in January. Rumania was still in the throes of a severe political crisis, the ultimate outcome of which was in doubt, although King Carol had ousted Goga from the premiership in February and was obviously bent upon establishing a thinly disguised monarchical dictatorship. Soviet Russia was preoccupied with the last of the great Moscow treason trials, which opened on March 2, and with events in the Far East where the anti-Comintern aspect of Japanese aggression was heightened by Hitler's announcement in his speech of February 20 of German recognition of Manchoukuo and by his expression of open preference for a Japanese victory over a China dominated by 'Bolshevism.' Poland preferred that German attention should be pulled southward by *Anschluss* rather than eastward in her own direction, while Beck,

on a visit to Rome, March 5-10, was reported to be angling for inclusion in any appeasement plans. In these circumstances Czechoslovakia fell back upon a defensive attitude announced by Premier Hodža on March 4, when with reference to Nazi declarations regarding the ten million Germans he declared that if attacked Czechoslovakia would 'defend, defend, defend!' At the same time, however, Czechoslovakia called upon her ally France to face the seriousness of the situation.

France, still financially weak and politically unstable, with one crisis barely avoided by Cabinet shifts in mid-January and another developing in late February and early March, was in no position to deal firmly with the menace of an ever-stronger Reich on the one side and a Franco victory in Spain on the other. Her pact with Soviet Russia had been reduced to a mere formality despite the reiteration by Delbos and Premier Chautemps in the Chamber's debate of February 25-27 of French loyalty to both Czechoslovakia and the U.S.S.R. Flandin, representing the French appeasement forces that were gathering strength, openly advocated denunciation of these ties and the negotiation of a Four-Power Pact with Germany and Italy. In view of the Government's shaky position at home and abroad, and the refusal of Great Britain to join in any intervention move, Chautemps and Delbos, while they gave Austria words of sympathy, dared do no more than to condemn the doctrine of 'racialism' and 'regret that certain recent events and declarations in Germany [were] not of a nature to create the reciprocal atmosphere which [remained] the necessary condition of agreement.'

With Great Britain and Italy, therefore, lay the fate of Austria. Had either Power taken a firm position, the wavering anti-Nazi forces might yet have been rallied to stop Hitler's forceful annexation of Austria. Even though Mussolini had deserted Schuschnigg at the time of the Berchtesgaden crisis, there was some hope right up to March 11 that he might attempt to prevent *Anschluss*. The Austrian Chancellor was completely disillusioned concerning Italian support only at the last moment. It is quite likely that Mussolini did not anticipate a sudden move by Hitler and hoped that an accord with Great Britain over Spain and the Mediterranean might yet enable him to keep the Nazi legions from the Brenner frontier. He is reported to have told London immediately upon receiving news of the Berchtesgaden meeting that an Anglo-Italian agreement was a question of now or never. Whatever his calculations, he failed to lift a finger to save Austria.



Aside from the hampering complications in the Far East, where Japan on February 12 had curtly refused to reveal her naval building plans, and in Spain, whose Nationalists were again sinking British ships, Great Britain's attitude toward the situation in Austria was determined by two considerations. In the first place, Englishmen still harbored a bad conscience about the prohibition of *Anschluss* in the peace treaties and subsequent agreements, and they were inclined to look at the situation as one in which Austrian Germans should have the right of self-determination which Hitler had been prating about. In the absence of a traditional direct interest in Central Europe, this was a very important factor. In the second place, Chamberlain had decided to make another attempt at appeasing Germany, for at the end of January he summoned Henderson from Berlin to instruct him in the next move. From Chamberlain's point of view, if *Anschluss* would help to 'satisfy' Hitler and make him an amenable and peaceable citizen of Europe, then by all means let him have it. The course of appeasement, however, by no means ran smoothly, for Laborites, Liberals, and anti-appeasement Conservatives were gathering strength. They argued that the appeasement policy, even though accompanied by ever-increasing armament expenditures, was ruining the chances of collective, and therefore effectual, action in favor of peace. Furthermore, some formerly all-out appeasers began to cool toward Germany because of Hitler's bullying tactics both with Schuschnigg and the church question which was prominent at just this time. The conflicting views in Great Britain came into a head-on collision over Foreign Secretary Eden's resignation on February 20.

The divergence between Chamberlain and Eden had apparently been developing ever since the Chamberlain-Mussolini exchange of the previous July, when the Premier began to take the conduct of foreign policy into his own hands. It is possible that a divergence of views may have been accentuated by the changes at the Foreign Office on January 1, when the veteran Under-Secretary Sir Robert Vansittart, who was regarded as anti-German and very pro-French, was replaced by Sir Alexander Cadogan and given the new title 'Chief Diplomatic Adviser' — a rather meaningless designation since it was well known that Chamberlain had his own advisers outside the Foreign Office. While Chamberlain represented the final dispute with Eden to be solely over the method of dealing with Italy, Eden declared that there were other issues. There can be little doubt that the attitude toward *Anschluss* was one.

On this matter Eden had publicly declared that England could not 'disinterest' herself from events in Central Europe, and had instructed Henderson to remind the German Government of Britain's interest in Austria, though he had not apparently used the words 'independence and integrity.' Since Eden told the House of Commons on February 17 that Great Britain was prepared for consultation according to the Stresa resolution, it would appear that Eden wanted Italy to stand by the 1935 tripartite declaration in favor of Austria, as well as to adhere to the British plan for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Spain. When Italian Ambassador Grandi met with Chamberlain and Eden at 10 Downing Street on February 18, there is evidence that Grandi refused to discuss Austria, and furthermore, that Chamberlain was unwilling to stand by his Foreign Secretary. Moreover, since the Italian press had been demanding Eden's removal as a condition for an Anglo-Italian agreement and since Hitler had singled him out on the morning of February 20 for particularly nasty digs, his resignation that same afternoon made it look as if Chamberlain had let him go at the dictation of Mussolini and Hitler.

In the House of Commons debate of February 21 and 22, Eden stressed the issue of method in negotiating with the dictators, indicating that he thought Great Britain was yielding too much ground and should begin to make her own terms rather than meekly to follow the lead of the aggressors. In answer to Eden and the opposition critics and after dwelling upon his usual theme of peace and rearmament, Chamberlain declared that he was compelled to follow a policy of realism rather than of idealism. As for the talk of collective security based upon the League of Nations, he warned that 'we must not try to delude small and weak nations into thinking that they will be protected by the League against aggression . . . when we know that nothing of the kind can be expected.' Here was plain talk for Austria, Spain, China, and any other country which felt menaced by one of the totalitarian Powers. It was the language of 'realism' that both Mussolini and Hitler understood well.

It is not surprising, therefore, that when Henderson finally saw Hitler on March 3 to broach the subject of an agreement, the Fuehrer gave him scant encouragement. The British Ambassador adopted a sweetly reasonable approach, suggesting that changes be brought about on a plane of 'higher reason' rather than by 'mere force.' Did he catch the raucous sounds of the

chanted 'Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!' in Graz and Linz and the tramp of marching German soldiers on their way to the Austrian border? Probably Hitler's ear was more attuned to that sort of thing when he replied that the British press campaign against himself had to be stopped; that he would not tolerate the interference of third parties in Central Europe; that as far as he was concerned colonies could wait "4, 6, 8, or even 10 years"; that there could be no talk of limiting armament while he was threatened by the French and Czechoslovak pacts with the Soviet which "should never have been allowed into Europe." To every direct question of Henderson's he gave a vague reply, not even committing himself on the question of a plebiscite in Austria which the German press had been demanding.<sup>7</sup> He was obviously preoccupied with the situation there, however, but knew that he had little cause to worry about what England and France might do. Therefore he neither gave Chamberlain any satisfaction nor altered his plans concerning Austria.

#### *5. Anschluss, March 10–April 10*

It is quite likely that Hitler set no timetable for the ultimate showdown in Austria and that it was Schuschnigg's announcement in an impassioned speech on the evening of March 9 of a plebiscite on the question of Austria's independence that determined the Fuehrer to act immediately. Schuschnigg, whose negotiations with the workers seemed to be going satisfactorily though slowly, was persuaded that if he could prove to the world that he was backed by a majority in Austria, he would immensely strengthen his own hand and perhaps be supported by Italy and other Great Powers in his struggle with Hitler. News of the plebiscite caused hopes once more to soar high among the Austrian anti-Nazis who predicted an easy victory for Schuschnigg on March 13. But Hitler, who had told Henderson on March 3 that not more than 15 per cent of the Austrians would back Schuschnigg, decided that he could not take the risk of a vote run by Schuschnigg on the question of independence. Although Ribbentrop, who had gone to London to present his letters of recall, was told to stay there, all the other high officials were summoned on March 10 to lay plans for immediate *Anschluss*. On the morning of March 11, Hitler struck by sending notice through Schuschnigg's pro-Nazi colleagues, Glaise-Horstenau

<sup>7</sup> Henderson, *Failure of a Mission*, pp. 113–17.

and Seyss-Inquart, that if the plebiscite were not called off, he would invade Austria. Schuschnigg summoned a number of reserves to the colors, but agreed in the afternoon to cancel the plebiscite. Then Hitler sent another ultimatum demanding Schuschnigg's resignation and the appointment of a completely Nazi Cabinet, at which President Miklas balked. As a final means of persuasion, the German military attaché, General Muff, appeared with the same demands backed again by threats of invasion and supplemented by a time limit expiring at 7.30 P.M.

What could Schuschnigg do? Patriotic fervor was already giving way to a panic rush for the railway stations. London had made 'verbal protests' at Berlin in the course of the day, though Henderson admitted them to be useless. The Reich had the force and also the answer that what was going on was an internal Austrian affair. The French Government was in the midst of the crisis which had finally come on March 10 with the resignation of the Chautemps Cabinet. General Franco in Spain, having captured Teruel on February 22, had already begun his triumphant march to the coast that was soon to cut Loyalist Spain in two. Mussolini, while not ski-ing, was again out of reach of his old friend Schuschnigg who tried to communicate with him. Czechoslovakia was assured by both Goering and Neurath that Hitler had no intention of attacking her. The Czechs, who might have caused a German army marching into Austria a great deal of trouble, did not even mobilize. As every illegal Swastika armband that had been hidden away in Austria until *Der Tag* was being dragged out of mothballs by Nazis and opportunists, Schuschnigg stepped to the microphone a little before eight o'clock and declared that, while it was a lie that the situation had got out of hand, he and President Miklas were not prepared to shed blood and had ordered the troops to make no resistance. 'So,' Schuschnigg concluded in his last words to any public audience, 'I take leave of the Austrian people with the German words of farewell uttered from the depths of my heart — "God protect Austria."'

That speech marked the end of independent Austria which in a last burst of patriotism had optimistically hoped to avoid 'hard corners.' Even before Schuschnigg spoke over the radio, Austrian Nazi units were taking control of the Chancellery and all the key posts in the capital. A little after 8 P.M. Seyss-Inquart told the Austrian people not to make any resistance and warned them that German troops might already be on the march. It was not

until nearly midnight, however, that Miklas appointed him Chancellor. As it would seem that the German army did not actually set foot on Austrian soil until early the next morning, the Reich was given plenty of time to allege that it had been invited into the country in order to put down civil disturbances. The accounts of exactly what happened and when between noon of March 11 and the morning of March 12 are so conflicting that it is impossible to determine the truth of the situation. It is interesting to note, however, that Italy, Great Britain, France, and the United States recognized the German annexation of Austria on the ground that it was the result of invitation rather than conquest, although such authorities as G. E. R. Gedye and Martin Fuchs assert that there was never any request for German entry by a constituted Government in Vienna.

Without attempting to portray the harrowing scenes of personal tragedy, the thousands of arrests directed by the Gestapo whose officials apparently reached Vienna before the army, and all the changes accompanying the Nazi assimilation of Austria, the story of triumph may be quickly told. On the morning of March 12, Hitler issued a proclamation charging Schuschnigg with violation of the July 1936 Treaty and the Berchtesgaden accord, protesting his own long-continued peaceful efforts, and declaring that the National Socialist Government in Vienna had requested the entry of German troops who would guarantee a 'real plebiscite.' The Fuehrer, crossing into Austria at Braunau, his birthplace, reached Linz in the afternoon, where he was met by Seyss-Inquart and where he declared the Treaty of St. Germain annulled. On March 13, the union of Austria and Germany was proclaimed and the date of April 10 set for a plebiscite in both countries on this action. On the same day, Hitler was proclaimed Commander-in-Chief of the combined German and Austrian armies, while Joseph Buerckel, former Nazi leader in the Saar, was given the task of reorganizing the Austrian Nazis and preparing for the plebiscite. Hitler at length arrived in Vienna on March 14, having been delayed, it would appear, by breakdowns in the German mechanized forces which were expected to precede him. Miklas had already resigned; Schuschnigg was under 'protective arrest'; there was nothing to mar Hitler's triumph nor detract from his claim that this was the 'greatest achievement' of his life, except the abject misery of the 'non-Aryans' and the former opponents of the Nazis which scarcely affected the victorious Fuehrer. On April 10, after the

usual campaign of speeches and promises and after the Austrian Archbishop, to the annoyance of the Vatican, had endorsed *Anschluss*, 99.1 per cent of the valid Reich ballots and 99.71 per cent of the Austrian approved the *Anschluss*. By this time Austria had become a German province with Seyss-Inquart as Governor, with the Austrian army incorporated into the German, and with all the other paraphernalia of Nazi rule — Labor Front, youth organizations, and the like — installed.

Meanwhile, European chancelleries were buzzing with excitement. The big question was, of course, What would Italy, France, and Great Britain do? That Hitler was not entirely sure of Italy, whose press had approved of Schuschnigg's proposed plebiscite, was indicated by the report that he sent troops across Austria to the Brenner Pass on the first day of entry. He had also written to Mussolini on March 11 that 'whatever may be the consequences of future events, I have traced clear the German frontier with regard to France. Now I draw it equally clear with regard to Italy. It is Brenner. This decision will never be jeopardized or attacked.' But Germany had little to fear from Italy where Ciano easily persuaded the Fascist Grand Council on March 12 not to intervene on the ground that what was happening in Austria was 'the result of a pre-existing situation and an open expression of the sentiments and will of the Austrian people. . . .' Appreciative of this attitude, Hitler telegraphed on March 13: 'Mussolini, I shall ever keep this in remembrance.' To this the Duce replied: 'My attitude is determined by the friendship between our two countries consecrated in the axis.' Mussolini went even farther than that on March 16 in an address to the Chamber of Deputies when he forswore all his previous promises concerning Austrian independence, declaring that Italy had 'never assumed any undertaking, direct or indirect, written or verbal.' He went on to explain his acquiescence in a move that put Italy at the mercy of a much stronger German Reich by saying that 'when an event is inevitable it is better that it should be done with your consent rather than in spite of you or, worse still, against you.' In that sentence lay the secret of Mussolini's policy then and ever since. He had been compelled to yield to a stronger man than himself.

The French Government, in process of change from the Chautemps to the Blum Cabinet which was not completed until March 13, was most anxious concerning the implications of *Anschluss* for Czechoslovakia, but after being informed in Rome

that Italy would not make any move, Paris could do no more than follow the lead of Great Britain. In addition to the protests of March 11 through Henderson at Berlin, Chamberlain and Halifax told Ribbentrop in London that the invasion of Austria would greatly endanger any understanding between Germany and England. After an emergency Cabinet meeting on March 12, a communiqué, noting that France and Great Britain were keeping in closest touch, stated: 'It was felt that the action of the German Government was bound to have the most disturbing effect upon Anglo-German relations and upon the public confidence throughout Europe.' By March 14, however, when Chamberlain discussed the situation in the House of Commons, the Government had accepted Hitler's claim that the Reich had been invited into Austria and Neurath's contention that forceful pressure had not been exerted, although the Premier repudiated the German contention that Great Britain had no right to interest herself in the fate of Austria. He then admitted the 'hard fact . . . that nothing could have arrested this action by Germany unless we and others with us had been prepared to use force to prevent it.' He repeated the assurances which the German Government had made to Czechoslovakia including Neurath's declaration that the Arbitration Convention of 1925 (part of the Locarno Agreement) was still in force, but made no definite British commitments concerning Central Europe.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, Chamberlain, in this and subsequent remarks, gave the impression that while Hitler's action had ended further Anglo-German talks for the time being and had strengthened the British Government's determination to rearm, it had not fundamentally changed the objectives and the methods of his appeasement policy.

This was clearly indicated in the British reply to a Soviet proposal of March 17 that the four Governments of Great Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union should meet and discuss means of collective action against aggression. Chamberlain on March 24 declared that this proposal 'would appear less a consultation with a view to settlement than a concerting of action against an eventuality that has not yet arisen.' Great Britain could not accept 'such mutual undertakings in advance to resist aggression,' and the Government was further of the opinion 'that the indirect, but none the less inevitable, consequences of such action as [was] proposed by the Soviet Government would be to aggravate the tendency towards the

<sup>8</sup> *Bulletin of International News*, XV (1938), 228-31.

establishment of exclusive groups of nations, which must, in the view of His Majesty's Government, be inimical to the prospects of European peace.' Thus, by refusing to recognize that the bloc of aggressors had already been formed, evidence of which, if needed, was contained in Mussolini's telegram of March 13 to Hitler, and by refusing to take any steps either through the League or through such special arrangements as Litvinov proposed to meet the German-Italian-Japanese Entente, Chamberlain but invited further aggression.

#### *6. Aftermath of Anschluss*

Poland had already taken the opportunity afforded by Hitler's Austrian coup to settle accounts with Lithuania. For eighteen years, there had been no communications of any kind across the frontiers nor any diplomatic and consular relations. Lithuania had refused to make friends with Poland as long as Poland held Vilna, designated in the Lithuanian Constitution as the capital, even though it had been in Polish hands ever since its seizure in October 1920. In every attempt at reconciliation Lithuania had apparently been willing to open the frontier, but not to establish diplomatic relations, both of which Poland had desired simultaneously. The killing of a Polish frontier guard on March 11 gave Beck the excuse for demanding, on March 17, with the backing of the overwhelmingly superior Polish army, that Lithuania establish diplomatic relations and open the frontier not later than March 31. On March 19, Lithuania yielded to what was described in the Lithuanian Parliament as an ultimatum, and by the end of the month the two countries had effected an exchange of diplomatic representatives. For a few days Europe feared that Poland meant to seize Lithuania, but it soon became apparent that Beck was aiming at the ultimate objective of a neutral bloc of states extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea which was impossible of attainment as long as there was no communication between Lithuania and Poland. Germany played up the incident as demonstrating the impotence of Russia, who had always been Lithuania's friend, and of the League. It was indeed the method of Poland, so similar to that employed by the Nazis, that aroused anxiety and revealed the bankruptcy of the collective security system. Beck himself frankly declared to newspaper representatives on March 19 that, since the League was dead, Poland had gone back to the old diplomacy.



While the Polish-Lithuanian incident helped to turn attention for a moment from *Anschluss*, the Anglo-Italian agreement of April 16 was far more significant, not merely because England and Italy were Great Powers, but also because their relations would affect the course of power politics in all Europe. Although preliminary discussions had begun before the Berchtesgaden crisis, the actual negotiations which began on March 8 between Lord Perth, British Ambassador, and Count Ciano at Rome were conducted under the shadow of *Anschluss*. Chamberlain's objective was quite clear. A settlement with Italy was a necessary part of his plans for a general European peace and, since Hitler's action in Austria had temporarily broken off the Anglo-German talks, the appeasement of Italy might provide a means of ultimately putting pressure upon Germany.

Mussolini's policy was not quite so clear, for there were at least two views of his position and aims. The one which the British Government seemed to hold was that Mussolini had been tricked by his friend Hitler over Austria and that therefore the Duce wanted an agreement with England and probably France in order to turn the tables. His speech to the Italian Senate on March 30 in which he recounted Italy's military strength and her experience in two wars and referred to 'certain passes' in the Alps that were being 'hermetically sealed,' suggested that the cordial telegrams exchanged with Hitler had been something less than sincere. Another interpretation that seemed to be supported by other public pronouncements, especially Ciano's, and by subsequent behavior was that Mussolini had bargained with Hitler over Austria and in compensation had been promised gains in the Mediterranean at the expense of Britain and France. Mussolini's object, according to this view, was to bluff Chamberlain into granting Italy such concessions as a Franco victory in Spain and naval equality in the Mediterranean.<sup>9</sup> Probably each policy was pursued at Rome, the one by Mussolini who could not but feel that *Anschluss* was a defeat for Italy, the other by Ciano who for one reason or another was staunchly pro-Nazi.

The Anglo-Italian Agreement was a very complex one, drawn up in the form of a protocol with twenty-one additional documents. The two Powers reaffirmed the 'Gentleman's Agreement' of January 2, 1937; they agreed to exchange information concerning the administration and disposition of their military,

<sup>9</sup> Cf. 'Spanish Mystery,' *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, April 1, 1938, p. 242.

naval, and air forces in the Mediterranean and North Africa; they recognized the integrity and independence of Saudi Arabia and the Yemen and equality of opportunity there for British and Italians to the exclusion of third parties; they promised not to use publicity or propaganda that would injure the interests of the other; they reaffirmed previous declarations concerning British interests at Lake Tsana (source of the Blue Nile), non-employment of native East African troops, rights of British nationals in East Africa, and the free use at all times for all Powers of the Suez Canal; Italy promised to adhere to the London Naval Treaty of March 1936 and to reduce her troops in Libya; and, together with Egypt, they signed a good neighbor ('*bon voisinage*') agreement with respect to Kenya, Somaliland, the Sudan, and Italian East Africa. All these things, while important in a general settlement, were of secondary significance compared with the questions of *de jure* recognition of the Italian conquest of Ethiopia and of Italian troops in Spain. One of Mussolini's dearest wishes was to wipe out all memory of sanctions by securing recognition of his East African Empire. While some ten states had already done so and twenty more had granted *de facto* recognition, the League still adhered to the so-called Stimson doctrine of not recognizing changes brought about by force. Great Britain refused to promise *de jure* recognition, but undertook to bring the matter before the next League Council meeting 'for the purpose of clarifying the situation of member states in this regard.'

Spain was an even more complicated business. Great Britain, it must be remembered, had been trying since the previous July to get the other Powers to agree upon a withdrawal of forces from both sides in Spain. Simultaneously with Eden's resignation Italy had notified her acceptance of the latest plan, and four days later Germany agreed to it. In the debates of February 21 and 22, Chamberlain had declared that one of the conditions for an agreement with Italy was that 'the situation in Spain should not be materially altered by Italy's sending fresh reinforcements.' Yet the Premier was himself compelled to admit in early April that Italy had sent reinforcements. It was generally believed that Germany also had played some part in enabling Franco to cut Loyalist Spain in two by reaching the sea at Vinaroz on April 15. The French were very much worried about the situation and one of the few acts of courage under the second Blum Government, which lasted about a month, from March 13

to April 8, was a 'relaxing' of frontier control permitting help to reach the Loyalists. That Britain signed an agreement with Italy at all indicated clearly that Chamberlain was neither willing to cause any difficulty over the well-known Italian determination to help Franco win nor particularly sympathetic with his Paris ally. He undoubtedly expected Franco to make quick work of the Loyalists thereby saving him further embarrassment. In the exchange of letters concerning Spain, Ciano promised to adhere to the plan for withdrawal of volunteers and declared that if their evacuation had not been completed when the war ended, they would 'forthwith leave Spanish territory' together with all war material. Perth in reply added the clause that a settlement of the Spanish question was a prerequisite for the entry into force of the Anglo-Italian agreement. All this was immediately interpreted by critics of the Chamberlain policy as an abandonment of the Loyalists. Their suspicions were later confirmed by Lord Halifax, who declared in the House of Lords in November that there had never been any 'lever value' in the Anglo-Italian agreement 'to make Italy desist from supporting General Franco and his fortunes.'

Even this concession to Mussolini, however, gave England little satisfaction in so far as Spain was concerned, for attacks by 'unknown' airmen upon British shipping now took the place of those by 'unknown' submarines in the previous summer. Moreover, the Loyalists continued such a stubborn resistance to the Nationalists, despite the sealing of the French frontier on June 13 at the behest of Rome, that the war continued to drag on and thus to postpone the ratification of the Anglo-Italian agreement. Nevertheless, certain portions of the agreement were acted upon. Italy adhered to the Montreux Convention concerning the Straits early in May. Lord Halifax, pleading for realism, put through the League Council on May 12 a resolution permitting each state to make its own choice concerning the recognition of Italian conquests, although Haile Selassie, who rose from a sick bed to appear before the Council, made Halifax's position an uncomfortable one by insisting that Ethiopia was far from conquered and by prophetically pointing out that those weak nations who were yielding to force in this question rather than supporting the law might some day find themselves abandoned to aggressors as Ethiopia had been. Despite the continued quarrels over Spain and the troublesome moral issue involved in the Ethiopian question, and except for bitter

Left-Wing criticism everywhere, Europe welcomed the Anglo-Italian agreement as a hopeful sign of peace. Even the French Government formed by Daladier on April 10 approved it and initiated negotiations with Italy on April 22 for a similar agreement. Needless to say, Germany applauded it as another proof of the usefulness of bilateral negotiations on a 'realistic' basis, and at the same time contended that the Rome-Berlin Axis was as solid as ever.

Neither the British nor the French Governments, however, relaxed their efforts to prepare for war while they professed to be on the right road to peace. At a meeting in London of Premier Daladier and his Foreign Minister Bonnet with British officials on April 28-29, one of the most notable actions was an agreement to continue the contacts between their general staffs which had begun in 1936 on the ground that it was 'of the highest importance in the present circumstances' to continue their collaboration for 'defense not only of their common interests but also those ideals of national and international life which have united their two countries.'<sup>10</sup> This was hailed as tantamount to a definite alliance and was compared with the entente before 1914 according to the terms of which Great Britain had refused to commit herself openly to military cooperation with France. Actually, as the Czechoslovak crisis later made clear, Britain was willing to help defend France, but not her Eastern allies. Thus the Anglo-French alliance was powerless to prevent further triumphs of Hitler.

Between May 3 and 9, the Fuehrer was entertained in Italy by Mussolini amid great pomp and thousands of secret police. What they said to one another was not revealed, but it did not require Hitler's boast that a 'bloc of 120 million people' had been created nor Mussolini's emphasis upon the friendship of the two peoples bound together by common revolutionary ideals to prove that the Axis was still firm. Italy's subsequent policy, moreover, showed equally clearly that since *Anschluss* the directive force of the Axis was not Rome but Berlin. Five days after Hitler left Italy, the Duce announced that Stresa was dead and would never be resurrected; and that there would probably be no agreement with France because France and Italy were on opposite sides of the barricades in Spain. It did not suit Hitler's plans to have Mussolini make too many friends in the Mediterranean. But the most striking proof of Nazi domination of Italy

<sup>10</sup> Official communiqué, *New York Times*, April 30, p. 6.

was her adoption of anti-Semitic laws in the summer. Since the whole philosophy of Fascist imperialism had up to that time been opposed to racism, and since the Vatican condemned it, the only conclusion that one can draw is that Mussolini had been compelled by his Nazi masters to conform to their ideology. Berlin's accomplishment of *Anschluss* had thus reversed the Italian victory of Vittorio Veneto over the Hapsburgs in 1918 by not only eliminating Italy from Central Europe, but by putting her at the mercy of German legions.

### 7. *Hitler's Profits from Anschluss*

Given the preponderance of the appeasers in the councils of the British Government, the weakness of France, and the impotence of Italy, the position of Germany after *Anschluss* was a very strong one, even though not yet predominant. The success of Hitler's venture had once more revealed the bankruptcy of collective security. The League was scarcely mentioned throughout the Austrian crisis. Furthermore, the small states all around Germany's borders, although they now feared Germany's armed might and began seriously to look to their defenses, hastened the process of European disintegration by ridding themselves of collective agreements. The Oslo states gave up their economic collaboration in July. In May, Switzerland asked from the League Council and obtained a recognition of its neutrality, meaning by that its release from the obligation to participate in applying sanctions against an aggressor. The U.S.S.R. was the only Great Power that still talked of general collaboration against aggression, but the voice of Litvinov was that of one crying in the wilderness.

On the economic side, Germany's acquisition of Austria represented both profit and loss. She gained Austria's relatively small amount of iron ore, her much more important timber resources, and her extremely valuable magnesite whose annual output was estimated to be almost enough to supply the needs of Germany's airplane production. Of greatest immediate use to Germany were the supply of unemployed labor and the large amount of gold reserve and foreign holdings in Austria which augmented her own stock of foreign exchange. On the other hand, Austria was less self-sufficient economically and particularly in food-stuffs than was Germany, and thus made more difficult the problem of autarchy. However, if one counted the indirect

gains, such as the addition of Austria's business connections with Southeastern Europe to Germany's, the Reich definitely profited by *Anschluss*. Moreover, the acquisition of Austria placed Germany in a position to dominate transportation facilities in Central Europe. Only a few days after *Anschluss*, German papers began to speak of Vienna as the 'Hamburg' of Southeastern Europe because of its position on the Danube which was already being linked by a series of canals, to be completed in 1943, with the Rhine and the Elbe. The wheat of Hungary, the oil of Rumania, and the minerals of Jugoslavia were thus brought closer to Germany's door.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps the greatest gain of all for Hitler, from a military point of view, was the strategic position which now was his even though the Reich's boundaries were extended and thus made harder to protect. *Anschluss* had given Germany a vantage ground from which to outflank Czechoslovakia and to gain easy access to the Hungarian plains. With an army increased by that of Austria and with military equipment superior to any of Germany's new neighbors, Hitler soon proved that he was ready to make the most of such advantages.

<sup>11</sup> For a fuller discussion of Germany's gains, see Sidney B. Fay, 'Nazi Gains and Losses,' *Events*, July 1939, pp. 48-54.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### MUNICH, 1938

AFTER the completion of *Anschluss*, Hitler was expected to pause and consolidate his gains before making his next move. This had been the past experience. A year had intervened between his denunciation of the Versailles armament clauses and the Rhineland coup. Two years had elapsed between the Rhineland coup and *Anschluss*. It was confidently asserted that Hitler would require another year or two before he could undertake his next 'Saturday Surprise.' But this time Hitler could not wait. He had to push on because he could not take the risk that, as British and French armament increased, appeasement might give way to resistance. His opponents had greater resources at their command than he and therefore he had to keep striking before they were ready.

#### 1. Czechoslovakia and the German Minority

From both the strategic and the political points of view, Hitler had to eliminate Czechoslovakia if he were ever to carry out his drive to the East and Southeast, if, indeed, he were ever to complete his 'preparations . . . for a reckoning with France.'<sup>1</sup> Geographically the Bohemian plateau commanded the road to the East whether by the Danube Valley between the Alps and the Boehmerwald or the Moravian gateway between the Sudetes and Carpathians. As long as Bohemia was strongly fortified and as long as the Czechoslovak Republic's highly mechanized army of nearly two million men stood ready to strike, Hitler could not risk an attack upon Poland, nor turn west to fight France. As long as the French-Czech-Soviet mutual-assistance pacts existed, Czechoslovakia also constituted a possible bridge between France and the Soviet, for it was separated from Russia by an airline distance of only one hundred miles and from the Rhine by only two hundred and fifty; without access to Bohemia, French-Soviet forces were eight hundred and fifty miles apart.

<sup>1</sup> *Mein Kampf* (Reynal and Hitchcock, 1940), p. 964.

Moreover, Czechoslovakia was the only truly democratic state in Central and Eastern Europe and was thus not only a military but an ideological bastion in the way of the totalitarian conquest of Europe.

Besides these considerations, there were economic advantages to be gained by a German acquisition or control of Czechoslovakia. This little country was far more highly developed industrially and far more evenly balanced between industry and agriculture than was Austria. The Bohemian cities of Prague and Pilsen were among the great industrial centers of Europe. Moravia was rich in wheat, Slovakia in agricultural and forest products, and Teschen in coking coal. Although Czechoslovakia had to import some raw materials, especially iron ore from Sweden, they were more than offset by her exports of coal and such manufactured goods as iron, steel, and engineering products, textiles of all kinds, glass and porcelain, shoes, and refined sugar. The value of her total exports in 1937 amounted to nearly a half billion dollars (11,971,000,000 crowns) while that of her imports was only a little less (10,966,000,000 crowns). Moreover, from the point of view of German water, rail, and air communications, especially after the annexation of Austria, Bohemia and Moravia constituted an inconvenient and obstructive peninsula jutting far into a German sea.

In maneuvering to gain control of Czechoslovakia, however, Hitler did not talk of these political, strategic, and economic values, but emphasized the 'right of self-determination' of the German minority. The Sudeten Germans, as they were called, although they were not merely located in the Sudetes Mountains, but also in those of the northwest and southwest sides of the Bohemian plateau, numbered about 3,200,000 according to the census of 1930, or a little more than 22 per cent of the total population of Czechoslovakia. They did not form an unbroken line along the natural frontiers of Bohemia, but were located in some five or six districts which were separated by areas of mixed or predominantly Czech inhabitants. The German districts, however, were among the most highly industrialized regions in Bohemia, possessing virtually all the lignite or brown coal, a valuable radium mine, nearly all the porcelain, two-thirds of the glass, and half the textile manufacturing, besides their proportionate share of other industries. By invoking the liberal doctrine of self-determination Hitler hoped to win the acquiescence of the Western appeasers in the union of this minority with the



Third Reich. Then the rest of Bohemia and Moravia would lie at his feet without natural or fortified frontiers, with much of its industry in his hands, and with other minorities — Polish, Hungarian, Ruthenian, and even some Slovakian groups — eager to follow the example of the Germans and to further the dismemberment of the Republic.

While the Sudeten Germans had many legitimate grievances against the Czechoslovak Government, the great majority of them had decided in the nineteen-twenties that they could best improve their position by political means within the constitutional framework of the Republic. However, the rise of the Nazis in Germany and simultaneously that of the Sudeten German Party led by Henlein in Czechoslovakia raised the minority problem to the rank of a first-rate political issue. Henlein himself has admitted that from the first his objective was annexation of the Sudetenland to the Third Reich, although he purposely disguised that ultimate objective for many years, claiming to be solely interested in bettering the lot of his fellow Germans. The effect of the depression, which hit the Sudetens hardest because of their dependency upon industry and foreign trade, gave Henlein his opportunity, while economic recovery caused his followers to drop away. In order further to weaken his hold, the Czechoslovak Government in February 1937 promised far-reaching reforms which, if promptly carried out, would have satisfied the German 'Activists,' as those German parties who were willing to cooperate with the Government were called. In the succeeding months, however, the Sudeten Germans came to feel that the Government was too slow in putting the reforms into effect, while Henlein refused to accept the promises as satisfactory and demanded autonomy for the German minority instead.

During the Austrian crisis in 1938, Henlein continued to voice his demands and on March 16, 1938, called upon all Germans in Czechoslovakia to join his Sudeten German Party. Since *Anschluss* seemed to prove that the Nazi drive for the unification of all Germans within the Reich was triumphantly marching on, the call to line up under the Swastika banner seemed irresistible to the Agrarian League and the Christian Social Party, who now deserted the Government and went over to Henlein. The position of the Czechs was rendered even more difficult by the attitude of other minority groups, for the leaders of the United Magyar parties, the Slovak People's Party, and the Poles supported

the demand for full autonomy made on March 29 by Ernst Kundt, Sudeten Party leader in the lower house of Parliament.

Although the Czech Government offered to provide the minorities with a charter of liberties, Henlein rejected the proposals in a speech before a party conference at Karlsbad on April 24. On this occasion, with thousands of hands upraised in Nazi salute, the air filled with cries of 'Sieg Heil!' and the little Fuehrer lifting his listeners to the pitch of frenzy in characteristic Nazi fashion, Henlein abandoned all pretense of democratic faith, demanded that Czechoslovakia change her foreign policy, and enunciated his famous Karlsbad program which embodied a significant increase in his demands upon the Prague Government. He wanted full equality between Sudeten Germans and Czechs, recognition of 'the Sudeten group of the German race' as a 'legal personality,' the establishment of boundaries between the Czechs and the Germans, autonomy for Germans throughout their own territory, special legal guarantees for those outside the 'closed settlement area' of their race, removal of all injustices suffered since 1918 and reparation for all damages arising therefrom, German state employees for all German districts, and full liberty for all Germans to proclaim their 'Germanism' and their adhesion to the 'ideology of Germans.'

Had these demands been those of a small minority, they would have been serious enough, but backed as they were, not only by the great majority of a fifth of Czechoslovakia's population, but also by the might of the Third Reich, their concession would have been disastrous. Accordingly, Emil Krofta, Czech Foreign Minister, speaking for the Government on May 6, rejected the Karlsbad program, but promised to make 'every concession except such as would minimize our sovereignty and endanger the security of the State and its present frontiers.'

Throughout these discussions in Czechoslovakia the German Government kept up the elaborate pretense that the Sudeten German question was a Czech domestic issue. Hitler himself, however, in his Reichstag speech of February 20, had ominously referred to the ten million Germans outside the boundaries of the Reich. Since *Anschluss* had brought some seven million Austrian Germans 'home,' there remained three million to be returned from Czechoslovakia. To be sure, Hitler had offered Czechoslovakia a non-aggression pact at least a half-dozen times between 1933 and 1938. Likewise, his Government had assured the Czechs on March 11 and 12 that Germany had no aggressive

designs on them, and had repeated the same assertion to Chamberlain who publicly announced it in the British House of Commons on March 14. But such declarations amounted to less than the breath required to state them, because Hitler had already broken his own solemn pledges more than once and was violating his promises to Austria at the moment his Ministers were making new ones to Czechoslovakia. In fact, not only the tone of Henlein and his supporters in Czechoslovakia, still officially unconnected with Berlin, but also that of the German press, clearly indicated that Hitler intended to strike at Bohemia, now within 'the firm grip of the Reich frontiers,' as the *Hamburger Nachrichten* described the situation on March 15.

## 2. *The Great Powers and Czechoslovakia*

Since the Sudeten German question was, therefore, but a part of the broader issue of Germany versus Czechoslovakia, the attitude of the Great Powers was of vital importance for the outcome of the inevitable struggle. Of Czechoslovakia's two allies, Soviet Russia was alone insistent that concerted international action should be taken to meet the danger of a German attack upon the Czechs. The Soviet press had been predicting for more than a year and a half that Hitler intended to make a 'second Spain' of Czechoslovakia, and it continued throughout the spring and summer of 1938 to issue warnings of the dangers to general peace and security if Hitler should now have his way. France, both under the Blum Government and that of Daladier after April 10, declared that she would live up to her treaty obligations, which required immediate assistance to Czechoslovakia if she were attacked. The ultimate decision of Russia under her mutual-assistance pact with Czechoslovakia was dependent upon French action, but what the French did, despite the words of Blum and Daladier, was dependent upon the British attitude.

In this key position, Chamberlain scarcely succeeded in heartening those who felt that future peace depended upon resistance to German expansion. His acceptance of Eden's resignation, his attitude toward *Anschluss*, his treaty with Italy, his deprecatory remarks about the League of Nations, and his insistence in every speech that his constant aim was to keep peace and avoid war, all suggested that he was still absolutely determined upon appeasement, which, as the experience of nearly two years had already clearly demonstrated, amounted to letting the dic-

tators have what they wanted. His first definite pronouncement upon the Czech situation, after his notice of German assurances, came on March 24 in the speech of masterly equivocation in which he rejected the Soviet proposal of an international conference to deal with aggressors. While he refused to pledge British assistance to Czechoslovakia should Germany attack her and did not even state categorically that Britain would help France if she were drawn into the conflict, he did indicate that war over Czechoslovakia might find Britain involved because of 'the inexorable pressure of facts.' This was pretty vague coming from the responsible head of the British Government, even though he did assert Britain's determination to live up to her pledges to Belgium and France and offered to 'render any help' in the power of the British Government 'towards the solution of questions likely to cause difficulty between the German and Czechoslovak Governments.'

Behind the Prime Minister's words there existed an influential group who were convinced that Britain should give Germany a free hand in Central and Eastern Europe in order to obtain peace in the West. Most prominent among this so-called 'Cliveden set' were Lord Lothian, the Marquess of Londonderry, Viscount Astor, Lord Beaverbrook, and Lord Rothermere. In varying degrees of violence, Beaverbrook in the *Standard*, Garvin in the *Observer*, and Rothermere in the *Daily Mail* attacked the Czechs themselves, and, with striking similarity to Dr. Goebbels's propaganda, argued that Britain should refuse to join in the encirclement of Germany, should recognize that her interests did not lie in Europe, and should confine herself solely to safeguarding her really vital interests in the Dominions and overseas. Students of public opinion noted that the average Englishman had as little knowledge of the situation in Central Europe as he had displayed concerning Spain and wanted above everything else to live in peace. Considering the refusal of Chamberlain to make any prior pledges concerning Czechoslovakia, the vociferations in the press and the pacifism of the masses, Hitler could hardly come to any other conclusion than that he had little to fear from Great Britain if he should attempt a forcible 'solution' of the Sudeten German question.

Moreover, that was not the only encouraging element in the picture for Hitler. A large section of the French press in March and April took the view, long held in Great Britain, that France's Eastern allies were not worth the bones of a single French conscript. In *Le Temps*, for example, Joseph-Barthélemy declared

'with pain, but with firmness' that three million Frenchmen should not be sacrificed in order to save Czechoslovakia, because in his opinion the French treaties with her had been invalidated by the loss of the League's power and the German denunciation of the Locarno Pacts.<sup>2</sup> The policy pursued by Bonnet, Daladier's 'extremely vain, extremely ambitious, very touchy' Minister of Foreign Affairs, suggested that he, too, held the same view. In short, many Frenchmen were coming to believe that in order to be sure of British support France should withdraw politically as well as militarily behind the Maginot line and let Germany do as she pleased in the East.

Probably these views were never put into so many words by Chamberlain and Halifax or by Daladier and Bonnet, certainly not when they met at London on April 28 and 29. Perhaps all four, despite Czech appeals to them and rumors that Germany was already preparing for action by the end of May, were so intent upon pursuing the mirage of appeasement that they did not take the storm warnings seriously. Whether or not the story is true that Chamberlain demanded French denunciation of the treaty with Czechoslovakia, Daladier did apparently insist that France would honor her obligations. If, however, he hoped to win a pledge from Chamberlain of support in case the treaty had to be observed, he failed, for Chamberlain would go no farther than his declaration of March 24. In the end, the British and French agreed to use their influence at Prague and Berlin to bring about a pacific solution of the Sudeten German question, thus admitting the Reich's relation to the problem and entering the path of mediation which eventually led by way of the Runciman mission to the Munich settlement.

While Hitler was visiting Mussolini in Rome, Great Britain and France told Prague, on May 7, that they desired a peaceable solution of the Sudeten problem and were ready to render any possible help in that direction. They further advised the Czechs to make even more concessions than those embodied in the proposed Nationality Statute which was being drafted in fulfillment of Premier Hodža's promise of March 29. Hodža, accepting their advice, delayed his program of passing and codifying legislation dealing with the minority question and undertook fresh negotiations with the Sudeten Germans.

If the Czechs had faith in the determination of France and

<sup>2</sup> See Alexander Werth, *France and Munich* (New York and London, 1939), pp. 118-23; and V. M. Dean, *Europe in Retreat* (New York, 1939), pp. 124-25.

Great Britain to bring about a solution of the Sudeten question without the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, it was misplaced. France was tied to Britain, and in Britain, Chamberlain and his more intimate Cabinet colleagues apparently decided sometime in May that they would not oppose the annexation of the Sudetenland to Germany if other solutions failed. The fundamental reasons for such an attitude were the firm determination to reach an agreement with Germany at almost any cost, consciousness of British unreadiness for war, and the conviction that France and Russia could not and would not fight for Czechoslovakia. This last argument was used by Chamberlain in an informal talk with foreign correspondents at Lady Astor's house about May 10, which was reported to New York and Montreal newspapers by Harold Driscoll, who did not name the Prime Minister, but said that he was 'now privileged to shed what can truly be called official light on the real British attitude.'<sup>3</sup> According to Driscoll, Chamberlain was of the opinion that Czechoslovakia could not continue in its existing form (a contention long held by such appeasers as Rothermere) and that concessions should be made promptly to Germany in order to avoid war. He also thought that 'frontier revision might be advisable' which would 'entail moving the frontier back for some miles to divorce this outer fringe from Prague and marry it to Berlin.' Thus, a 'smaller but sounder Czechoslovakia would result.' Since Nevile Henderson in Berlin was quite as much of an appeaser as anyone in London, it is quite likely that he failed to conceal entirely such views as those which Chamberlain frankly gave to the newspapermen. Probably that is the reason, and not Hitler's conciliatory attitude as Henderson seemed to think, why Ribbentrop 'warmly welcomed' the Anglo-French *démarche* of May 7 and why Hitler considered it 'the first step toward the accomplishment of his aims.' If the Nazis played their cards right, Great Britain and France might be persuaded to hand them the Sudetenland on a silver platter, garnished with olive branches. No doubt Henlein, who made a mysterious trip to London on May 12, gained the same impression. Although Winston Churchill and others tried to warn him of the risks involved in his course of action, probably Chamberlain and certainly the appeasement press gave him

<sup>3</sup> Quoted and summarized from the *New York Herald Tribune*, May 15, 1938, by H. F. Armstrong, *When There Is No Peace* (New York, 1939), pp. 30-31. Cf. R. W. Seton-Watson, *Munich and the Dictators* (London, 1939), pp. 38-39. Driscoll's article was never published in Britain.

every reason to feel confident that he need fear nothing from Great Britain. At the meeting of the League of Nations Council on May 16, Lord Halifax plainly indicated in his attitude toward Ethiopia and the Covenant that Great Britain could not be counted upon to uphold either commitments or principles if they stood in the way of what he euphemistically called 'a practical victory for peace.' Since at the same time he attempted to defend the British agreement with Italy, and continued to block effective action against the German and Italian aggression in Spain, his words could only be interpreted to mean that Great Britain was ready to make yet more concessions to the Italian and German despots. They above all others in Europe could well appreciate the British Foreign Minister's further statement in the House of Lords on May 18 that this 'practical victory for peace' was 'really a question of political judgment, and not of the eternal and immutable verities,' for that was the language of totalitarian *Realpolitik*.

### 3. From the May Crisis to the Berchtesgaden Meeting

Meanwhile, Czechoslovakia, preparing for the municipal elections on May 22, was also attempting an appeasement policy. As a peace offering to Germany, President Beneš decreed a sweeping amnesty to political prisoners of whom more than half were Sudeten Germans. As an act of friendliness toward Italy, he recognized the conquest of Ethiopia without waiting to see what the Council of the League would do. These gestures were scarcely noticed, however, because of the crisis which arose, May 20–21, over the alleged plan of the Reich to invade Czechoslovakia. The facts of this episode are still a matter of controversy. During the night of May 20, the Czechs, alleging that Germany was massing troops on their border, ordered extraordinary maneuvers for one class of reserves and for specialist troops from many classes. A serious war scare was the result. The British Government made vigorous representations against war at Prague and Berlin. The French declared that they would carry out their obligations to Czechoslovakia, but again advised that concessions be made to the German minority. Moscow advised Prague to order a general mobilization and promised assistance. The German press, however, claimed that the incident arose from a hoax. Neville Henderson in Berlin believed that there were no German troop concentrations, not only be-

cause General Keitel said that there were none, but also because his own military attaché and those of other countries could find no evidence of any. The tone of the Moscow press throughout May gave grounds for the belief, held in anti-Soviet quarters, that Russia had spread the alarm in order to precipitate war or to test the loyalty of France. The Czechs, however, insisted that their fears were well-founded, and pointed out that the Germans themselves admitted that there were troop movements even though they denied that they were directed against Czechoslovakia.

The effects of the scare upon all parties were very significant. First of all, it clearly demonstrated that the Czech-Sudeten issue was no longer a purely domestic affair. In the second place, the anti-Nazi press everywhere was jubilant over what it interpreted as a triumph for the policy of resistance to Germany, because the fact that Hitler not only did not make any move against Czechoslovakia, but categorically denied that he had intended to do so was taken as a sign that he had been outpaced by the valiant Czechs. Even the pro-Nazi French press ceased its earlier cry for the abandonment of France's Eastern alliances and grudgingly gave Czechoslovakia a pat on the back. Consequently, the Czechs became overconfident, not only in their own strength, but also in the support that they could rely upon from France and England. Finally, the whole affair was a smarting blow to Hitler's pride. Neville Henderson believed that it caused Hitler for the first time to plan definitely for the annexation of the Sudetenland and the humiliation of the Czechoslovak Republic. More likely, it revealed to Hitler that he could not yet count upon an easy victory over the Czechs. In any event, on May 29, Hitler ordered a marked expansion in the army and air forces and the completion of Germany's western fortifications on the ground that 'a Great Power cannot accept a second time such a mean assault.'

For more than two months, however, while Germany was straining every nerve to complete the *Westwalle* and to build up its forces, Hitler precipitated no new crisis. During this time attention centered once more upon the negotiations between the Czech Government and the minorities. Henlein's Sudeten German Party, which polled between 82 and 85 per cent of the German vote in the municipal election, at first declared that it would not confer unless the Czech troops were withdrawn from the Sudetenland. This meant, if complied with, that the frontier of



Bohemia would be left virtually undefended. As a result of British intervention, the party modified its stand and agreed to prepare a detailed memorandum translating the Karlsbad demands into concrete proposals. Presented on June 7, it asked for drastic decentralization of government and considerable territorial autonomy for the several minority groups. The Slovak People's and the United Magyar Parties made similar demands. Using both the Henleinist plan and its own drafts of a nationality statute as a basis for negotiation, the Czechoslovak Government on June 30 submitted to the Sudeten Party delegates part of its proposed legislation without, however, presenting any provisions for territorial autonomy. This failure to meet at once all the demands of the Sudeten Germans was criticized by the Reich press which had maintained a menacing attitude ever since the May crisis. After a visit of Henlein to Hitler on July 9, the German press and radio intensified its campaign of hatred against the Czechs, representing them to be heartless oppressors of an innocent and unoffending German minority.

Since Premier Daladier of France again bluntly declared on July 12, just before the impending visit of the British royal couple to Paris, that 'the solemn engagements undertaken towards Czechoslovakia' were for France 'indisputable and sacred,' there was some hope that he might persuade England to support the Czech position. But, impressed by the German views of the situation and by German military activity, the Chamberlain Government was still heading in the opposite direction in an effort to appease Germany. Among the proposals for achieving a peaceful solution of the Sudeten problem was that of Henderson, who suggested that a four-Power conference be summoned jointly by Great Britain and Italy. This scheme, a significant foreshadowing of the later procedure at Munich, was rejected, however, because of the difficulty at the moment of excluding Soviet participation from any such international action. As an alternative, Chamberlain and Halifax decided to send Lord Runciman to Czechoslovakia as an official British adviser and mediator. Connected chronologically with this decision was a surprise visit to London of Captain Wiedemann, a confidant of Hitler, who had a short talk with Halifax on July 18 just before his departure with the King and Queen for Paris. Just what Wiedemann said to Halifax is unknown, but he undoubtedly attempted to keep Britain firm in her determination not to commit herself with respect to Czechoslovakia. If he had hoped to

weaken the Anglo-French Entente, he did not succeed, for the visit of the British royal couple to Paris, July 19–21, was outwardly a triumphant manifestation of Anglo-French solidarity, even though it did not fulfill the hopes of Czech partisans.

The discussions between Halifax, Premier Daladier, and Foreign Minister Bonnet during the visit are still not a matter of public record. Daladier probably insisted upon French loyalty to Czechoslovakia, although there was ground for the suspicion that his Foreign Minister had already decided not to risk any Frenchmen for that doughty Republic. On the other hand, Halifax did not succeed in getting the French to share responsibility for the Runciman mission, although he did apparently obtain their consent and possibly their cooperation in pressing the Czechs to accept it. Under the threat that a refusal would be published, which would create a bad effect on public opinion, Prague acquiesced in the mission. For some reason, however, Berlin reserved its opinion concerning the mission when it was announced in London on July 25, and alleged that the Government had not been consulted in advance. Thus, whatever the conversations in London and Paris, Great Britain was alone responsible for sending Runciman to Prague.

Just what Chamberlain and Halifax hoped to gain by the Runciman mission is a matter of doubt. The Czechs sought to make the best of the situation by saying that the appointment indicated a real desire to help them, but they must have been suspicious of it even though they probably did not know that Runciman's instructions included a statement that the possibility of a territorial adjustment with Germany should not be ruled out. Considering Runciman's total lack of special qualifications, either in terms of past experience or of personal knowledge of the situation, and considering that his right-hand man, Ashton-Gwatkin, was a diplomat of the appeasement school, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the mission was a means of gaining time in which to soften up the Czechs and even the French for a 'peaceable' settlement. After all, Chamberlain was primarily interested in preserving the appearance of negotiation, however much Hitler might threaten to use force and even though in the end he might get his way. The Prime Minister's attitude was revealed when, in reply to the charge that Runciman was to 'hustle the Czechs,' he said that the opposite was the truth. 'Our anxiety,' he continued, 'has been lest the Czechoslovak Government should be too hasty in dealing with a situation of

such delicacy that it was most desirable that the two sides should not get into a position where they were set, and unable to have any further give-and-take between them.' As it turned out, the British Prime Minister saw to it that the Czechs did all the giving and the Germans all the taking.

Even before Runciman arrived in Prague on August 3, the Czechoslovak Government had disclosed the general nature of its plans for administrative reform, which, together with those of the minorities, were to provide the basis for immediate negotiations. Although Runciman attempted to forward discussion and, after a complete break on August 17, succeeded four days later in getting both the Czechs and the Sudeten Party to agree to a new basis for negotiation, ever-recurring incidents on the frontier and the Reich's military preparations prevented any real progress. Extensive German army maneuvers beginning on August 15, authorization to requisition civilian goods and services, the calling up of reservists and the retention of recruits beyond the usual term were interpreted outside Germany as constituting partial mobilization and indicating a determination to force a settlement of the Sudeten question. However, in reply to Ambassador Henderson's protests that such steps would hinder a successful mediation by Lord Runciman and perhaps endanger the peace of Europe, Ribbentrop refused to discuss the military measures and expressed the view that Britain's policy had only increased Czech stubbornness.

It had been expected that Sir John Simon, who was to speak at Lanark on August 27, would make a new declaration of British policy, but he merely reaffirmed Chamberlain's statement of March which had avoided any prior guarantee of Czechoslovakia, but had warned that if war broke out it might not be confined to those who had assumed definite obligations. On the same day the British Foreign Office deplored Henlein's announcement of August 26 that members of the Sudeten Party would defend themselves when attacked by 'Marxist mobs,' and at the same time praised the 'conciliatory attitude' of the Prague Government which had just presented a third plan for reforms. In conjunction with these statements and while the French were calling up reserves to man the Maginot line, came the announcement that a large part of the British home fleet would leave on September 6 for maneuvers north of Scotland. This caused the Reich to notify Britain on August 31 that it, too, would order its fleet to the North Sea for maneuvers in September. On the same

day, Sir Neville Henderson, who had just returned to Berlin from consultation with the London Cabinet, gave the Secretary of the German Foreign Office a 'strong personal warning' as to the British attitude if Germany attacked Czechoslovakia and 'particularly if France were compelled to intervene.' On September 1, Sir Neville repeated the warning in the course of an interview with Foreign Minister Ribbentrop.

Meanwhile, in an effort to bring Hitler more directly into the Czech-Sudeten negotiations, Runciman, or his superiors in London, authorized Henlein to carry the latest Czech proposals to Berchtesgaden. Hitler, after a conference with Henlein on September 1 and 2, disapproved the plans and apparently interpreted their submission to himself as a sign of weakness. Thenceforth, whatever the Czechs or the British offered as a solution of the Sudeten German question was taken as the signal for additional German demands.

Despite Hitler's attitude, the Czechs decided to make even more far-reaching concessions. They wanted to demonstrate beyond the shadow of a doubt that they could not be blamed for any break with the Sudeten Germans or with Hitler's Reich. If it came to that, they still pinned their faith on the loyalty of their French and Russian allies. They noted with hope the British criticisms of German conduct and particularly the order to the British fleet. Although they were well aware that both Italy and Germany were seeking to stir up Hungarian action and to wean Rumania and Yugoslavia away from the Little Entente, they still had reason to feel that Poland, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Turkey would support them. While the Polish minority in Czechoslovakia had participated in the demands for reform, Nazi agitation had stirred up the Germans in Poland and reacted unfavorably upon the Poles in Germany whose protests were reproduced with indignant comments in Poland. The Imredy Government in Hungary which replaced Daranyi's on May 13 was still anxious to follow a middle course between the Axis and the Little Entente whose Council, meeting at Bled on August 21-23, not only confirmed the solidarity of the alliance, but also took further steps toward better relations with Hungary by initialing agreements with her which recognized her right to equality in armament in return for a pledge of non-aggression. Finally, the Czechs knew that many Sudetens would prefer autonomy within the Republic to annexation by Germany.

Prague's 'Fourth Plan,' submitted to Lord Runciman on Sep-

tember 5 and to the Sudeten Party one day later, not only embodied provisions for minority participation in state offices, loans to aid distressed areas, and complete equality of minority languages with the Czech in official affairs, but also proposed a system of cantonal government in which the minorities would have control over the police and would run their own local affairs except in matters affecting the unity and security of the state. Lord Runciman himself believed that 'this plan embodied all the requirements of the Karlsbad eight points and with a little clarification and extension could have been made to cover them in their entirety.' But the Sudeten Party extremists would not accept the plan, and Henlein did not even wait to receive it before leaving on the morning of September 6 to attend the Nuremberg Nazi party rally as Hitler's personal guest. Furthermore, the Sudeten German leaders used a fracas in the town of Moravská Ostrava on September 7 as a pretext for again breaking off negotiations with Prague.

At this juncture on the morning of September 7, when all eyes were turned toward Nuremberg to see what the Fuehrer in the midst of his party cohorts would do, the *London Times* gave support to the idea of a German annexation of the Sudetenland. Even though the same paper reported that the British and French Governments had given their blessing to the Czech's Fourth Plan, the editors of *The Times* saw fit to say that 'it might be worth while for the Czechoslovak Government to consider whether they should exclude altogether the project, which has found favor in some quarters, of making Czechoslovakia a more homogeneous State by the secession of that fringe of alien populations who are contiguous to the nation with which they are united by race. In any case the wishes of the population concerned would seem to be a decisively important element in any solution that can hope to be regarded as permanent, and the advantages to Czechoslovakia of becoming a homogeneous State might conceivably outweigh the obvious disadvantages of losing the Sudeten German districts of the borderland.'<sup>4</sup> The similarity of the language with that used by Chamberlain on May 10, reference to the right of self-determination, and use of the Nazi concept of race, suggested at once that this article expressed the views of the Prime Minister and his fellow appeasers, though the Foreign Office denied that it was inspired. Several Paris newspapers were arguing at the same time that the Sudeten issue

<sup>4</sup> As quoted by Dean, *Europe in Retreat*, pp. 132-33.

ought not to be allowed to precipitate a general war and one, on September 6, took exactly the same view as *The Times*. This attitude on the part of Prague's ally was more significant than that of Great Britain, who was not, it must be remembered, pledged to give aid to Czechoslovakia. Altogether the Nazis had every right to believe that neither London nor Paris would prevent a forcible solution of the Sudeten question.

As the time for Hitler's address at the closing session of the Nuremberg rally — September 12 — drew nearer, the atmosphere grew more and more tense. Goering thundered invectives against Prague. Rioting in the Sudetenland hindered further negotiations. The British Cabinet took precautionary naval measures. The French announced that their fleet had been equipped and provisioned and that a million men were under arms. The huge British and French trade-union groups representing about five million workers in each country requested their Governments to be firm and promised cooperation. Neville Henderson tried to impress all the Nazi leaders at Nuremberg except Hitler with the seriousness of Chamberlain's and Simon's statements. The British Cabinet, however, was divided. One group, backed by the high permanent officials of the Foreign Office, favored saying unequivocally that the Czech concessions were adequate; the other, composed of the appeasers, desired to continue letting events take their course. The same situation existed at Paris.

There were signs that France would not have been left in the lurch had she at this critical time stepped forward on behalf of her ally instead of leaving the initiative and responsibility wholly to England. On September 11, Litvinov told Bonnet at Geneva that the Soviet would live up to the terms of its mutual-assistance treaties with Czechoslovakia and France, while the Rumanian Foreign Minister indicated that since his country had already permitted Soviet airplanes to pass over its territory, it would not resist them again, although it could not openly promise transit facilities. Equally important was the statement of Chamberlain to the press on the same day in which he stressed the ties uniting Britain and France and spoke of the 'probability in certain eventualities of this country going to the assistance of France.' Nevertheless, Bonnet and the appeasement press in France belittled the significance of this as they had former statements, and emphasized the weaknesses of the French position. The French Cabinet, torn between those who wanted to give a defi-

nite warning to Hitler before his speech and those who were willing to put yet more pressure on the Czechs, did nothing more on September 12 than to emphasize the unity of France and its empire. Since Prague's own ally took such a negative stand, it is no wonder that the British Cabinet, according to Chamberlain, decided that 'no further action could usefully be taken' before Hitler's speech of the evening.

Hitler's speech of September 12 did not commit Germany irrevocably to war. Nevertheless, it was a savage pronouncement. Representing the Sudeten Germans as the victims of 'democratic conceptions of the State,' and as objects of intolerable oppression, Hitler roared 'that if these tortured creatures cannot obtain rights and assistance by themselves, they can obtain both from us.' Furthermore, declaring that Germany could not a second time brook such a humiliation as that of May 21, he backed up his pledge to stand by the Sudeten Germans with references to the strengthening of the German military forces and with the boast that the fortifications in the Rhineland were being rushed to completion by 278,000 workers under Dr. Todt with additional help from 184,000 members of the labor service. Asserting that these things were being done in the interests of peace, he declared that he was not raising 'the claim that Germany may oppress 3,500,000 French or then that 3,500,000 English shall be surrendered to Germany for oppression. But I demand that the oppression of 3,500,000 Germans in Czechoslovakia shall cease and be replaced by the free right of self-determination.'

Two immediate results of the Fuehrer's speech and its reception in France and England were that the Poles began to think seriously of cooperating in the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, and Mussolini, apparently thinking that there would be no war, gave up the ideas of neutrality at which he had hinted early in the month and decided that he could best advance his own interests by emphasizing Axis solidarity. Thus, the high morale that the outcome of the May crisis had created among the opponents of Nazi aims began a rapid decline everywhere except in Czechoslovakia. Although the crisis was now moving rapidly to its climax, firm action by France and Great Britain might yet have saved the Czechs. In both Governments, however, appeasement won the day, because their active directors of foreign policy still believed that they could deal with Hitler, and the bewildered public could see only that the Sudetens were Germans after all and that to oppose the liberal principle of self-determin-

ation might mean bombs on their own heads. Therefore, the British continued their efforts at mediation while Daladier and Chamberlain began concocting a scheme for direct negotiations with Hitler.

In Czechoslovakia, during the last days of the Nuremberg Conference and especially after Hitler's speech, the Henleinists precipitated riots in various parts of the Sudetenland in the expectation of prompt assistance from the German army. To their dismay and bewilderment, the Czech army instead marched in to meet them, while the Government proclaimed martial law on September 13 in the turbulent districts. Thereupon the leaders of the Sudeten Party dispatched an ultimatum demanding repeal of martial law within six hours. When Prague refused to consider such a step under existing conditions, Henlein and Frank, taking the cue from Hitler, announced that thenceforward their demands would include 'self-determination.' Two days later, Henlein, after declaring that the Sudetens wished to 'go home to the Reich,' fled to Germany to escape arrest. At the same time Mussolini's paper, *Popolo d'Italia*, proposed a plebiscite, not only for the Sudeten Germans, but for all other minorities who might desire it, and drew the startling conclusion that Czechoslovakia had ceased to exist and that the time for compromises had passed.

Not only had Czechoslovakia not ceased to exist, but not all Sudeten Germans desired to follow the declaration of Henlein. After his flight, according to newspaper reporters, declarations of loyalty to the Czech Government poured in 'from members, local organizations and local leaders' of the Sudeten German Party. Lord Runciman himself put the situation negatively in his report when he wrote with reference to the Sudetenland that 'a very large majority of the inhabitants desire amalgamation with Germany.' Even the largeness of the majority was challenged by G. E. R. Gedye of the *New York Times*. Furthermore, the Czech Government by its firm action had brought the situation in hand by the evening of September 14 — a fact admitted by Chamberlain himself — and had further strengthened its own position by forcing Henlein and Frank to show their true colors by their flight to Germany. The stumbling-block, then, was not the internal weakness of Czechoslovakia, but the determination of Germany to prevent a settlement of the Sudeten crisis by any other means than its annexation to the Reich.

Since it was Hitler and not Prague with whom the Powers had



to deal, the question before them was: Should they stop him or should they yield? Tension mounted as all Powers looked to their military and naval preparations. On September 14, the British Government ordered the fleet to be on the 'alert.' The French fully manned their defenses. The Reich, following a quarrel between Hitler and the army officers who were opposed to war, ordered heavy troop concentrations on the Czechoslovak border, ostensibly to prevent further incidents. Italy was reported to be calling up seven divisions of Carabinieri and withdrawing airplanes from Spain. On the diplomatic front, Japan affirmed her readiness to join Italy and Germany in fighting 'red' operations. Throughout the preceding weeks the Japanese had been holding the attention of Soviet Russia by an armed clash with them at Changfukeng and had been worrying Great Britain and France by threatening Hainan and other centers of European interest. It looked as if the Anti-Comintern Pact was effectively operating against the democracies as well as the Communists.

#### *4. From Berchtesgaden to Munich*

In these circumstances and with Daladier's approval, Chamberlain took the fateful step that by his own admission he had long contemplated. He decided to fly to Berchtesgaden in order to talk directly with Hitler, and to find out 'whether there was any hope yet of saving peace.' He realized, according to his narrative of events in the House of Commons on September 28, that he would run the risk of being accused of weakness in thus going to the man who was threatening to get what he wanted by force, and was apparently a little surprised that this move was greeted with the plaudits of his countrymen and was praised by such a man as Léon Blum for its 'noble audacity.' Only fear of a war that nobody wanted could account for this attitude. The people of France and Great Britain grasped at straws to save themselves from immediate drowning. Had they half-understood the character of Hitler, and the significance of Czechoslovakia for the security of Europe and themselves, they would have demanded resistance at the risk of war. Running away from that risk was scarcely an act of 'noble audacity,' but an act of moral surrender from which came the dénouement at Munich a fortnight later. For to Hitler the visit must have been a source of enormous self-satisfaction. The head of the once proud

British Empire came pleading to the head of a nation which only a half-score of years before had been on its knees. The policy of violence, of deceit, of taking risks was now bearing fruit. Those who had counseled moderation in the past — Neurath, Fritsch, Schacht, and the rest — had now been thoroughly discredited. The 'white war,' begun in 1936, was not bringing red war; it was bringing concessions to the little Austrian corporal.

Hitler, therefore, offered no conciliation when, on September 15 at his Berchtesgaden retreat where so many men before and afterward had been charmed or bullied, he conversed for three tense hours with the British Prime Minister. Chamberlain had thought that he could arrange a compromise; he was quickly persuaded instead that the only alternatives were surrender to Hitler's wishes or war. The Sudeten Germans, Hitler declared, 'must have the right of self-determination and of returning, if they wished, to the Reich.' If necessary, he would help them to do so, and — to continue Chamberlain's account of September 28 — 'he declared categorically that, rather than wait, he would be prepared to risk a world war.' Under the impression that the German Government planned to invade Czechoslovakia immediately, Chamberlain querulously asked why Hitler had allowed him 'to travel all that way,' since he was evidently wasting his time. Hitler replied that if the principle of self-determination were accepted then and there, 'he was ready to discuss ways and means of carrying it out,' but otherwise there was no point in continuing the conversation. Chamberlain then pointed out that he had no constitutional authority to make the commitment Hitler asked, but obtained the Fuehrer's promise that if developments in Czechoslovakia did not 'force his hand,' he would refrain from active hostilities until after the Prime Minister had been able to consult his colleagues.

Chamberlain returned to London on September 16 and on the same evening held a Cabinet meeting to which Lord Runciman, just back from Prague, presented his views of the situation. Since Runciman's published report was dated September 21, two days after the drafting of the Anglo-French plan for Czechoslovakia, and since the recommendations in the report are in accord with the Anglo-French proposals, but seem inconsistent with his own description of the situation, there is every reason to believe that those recommendations were doctored to suit the policy adopted by the Chamberlain Government at the dictation of Hitler. If Runciman gave the Cabinet on September 16 his

own views as set down in the first half of his report, he told them that the Czechs had been most conciliatory and that their Fourth Plan could have been made to cover the Karlsbad demands. This, according to him, no longer suited the Sudeten extremists who had deliberately prevented further negotiation for fear that a satisfactory solution within the framework of the Republic might be brought about. Although Runciman pointed out that the Czechs had been tactless and guilty of 'lack of understanding, petty intolerance, and discrimination' which had caused the Germans to mistrust them, nevertheless he was convinced that 'in times of peace the two people can live together on friendly terms . . . and . . . this is the real desire of the average Czech and German.' Therefore, as he wrote in his report: 'Responsibility for the final break must, in my opinion, rest upon Herr Henlein and Herr Frank and upon those supporters inside and outside the country who were urging them to extreme and unconstitutional action.' Despite this urge from outside, Runciman testified that when he left Prague on September 16, 'the riots and disturbances in the Sudeten areas, which had never been more than sporadic, had died down.' For one who had spent more time with the Henleinists than with the Czechs and had been royally entertained by Hitler's agents, Runciman had made out a remarkably good case for Prague and had presented most damning evidence against the contentions of Hitler and his Nazi retainers.

Chamberlain, however, had his story to tell. It was that Hitler would be satisfied with nothing short of 'self-determination,' meaning annexation to the Reich, for the Sudeten Germans. Should Great Britain say 'No' to the Czechs, who were ready to give the Sudetens every reasonable demand in order to keep their territory within the Republic, or 'No' to Hitler, who said he was ready to go to war to get what he wanted? The decision in favor of Hitler was scarcely in doubt, although there were rumors that some in the Cabinet, including Halifax, Colonial Secretary MacDonald, and Duff Cooper, felt that the amputation of the Sudeten area from Bohemia would be morally indefensible.

The French Cabinet at the same time was still divided — even more sharply than before Chamberlain's trip. While Daladier himself, Reynaud, and Mandel were opposed to unlimited concessions to Hitler, some members of the Cabinet were said to favor concessions even if they were not accepted by the Prague Government, in other words if they had to be forced upon

Czechoslovakia. One of these, Bonnet, who held the key position of Minister of Foreign Affairs, has even been accused of resorting to deliberate deception in order to win over his colleagues and French journalists to his point of view.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, there was a reported split in the attitude of the armed forces, Gamelin being in favor of resistance, but General Vuillemin, chief of the air force, being opposed to it. Thus, neither the British Government nor the French could display any will to resist Hitler's demands. The public in both countries was pacifistic and supine except for a small minority of Communists on the Left and Nationalists on the Right.

With this desire for appeasement and lack of energy and spirit on both sides of the Channel, Daladier and Bonnet met Chamberlain, Halifax, Simon, and Hoare in London on September 18. When asked about French preparations, Bonnet appears to have stressed the weakness of French aviation and to have avoided mentioning Gamelin's emphasis upon the quality of the French army. Such tactics hardly modified the attitude of Britain's all-out appeasers. Neither did the situation on the Continent. It was true that in Moscow *Pravda* attacked Chamberlain as a betrayer and urged France to stand firm; that news from Bucharest indicated a considerable augmentation of workers on the railway line which would directly connect the Soviet with Czechoslovakia. But, on the other hand, Hitler reiterated his demands and threats in an interview with a *Daily Mail* correspondent, while Mussolini at Trieste called for a 'totalitarian solution' of the Czechoslovak crisis which he explained in the following rather curious language for a dictator who had suppressed his own minorities: 'Plebiscites for all nationalities that demand them, for all nationalities that were forced into what wished to be great Czechoslovakia and which today reveals its organic inconsistency.' Finally, he hinted that if war came, Italy's place would be on the side against Prague. The deterioration in the general situation since the latter part of August was indicated by the changed Polish and Hungarian attitudes. In Warsaw the *Gazeta Polska*, organ of the party in power, was demanding that Czechoslovakia transfer Teschen to Poland. In Budapest, demonstrators were shouting, 'Down with the Czechs!' and 'Down with the Trianon Treaty!' Along the German-Czech borders, moreover,

<sup>5</sup> See Heinz Pol, *Suicide of a Democracy* (New York, 1940), pp. 81-84; Werth, *France and Munich*, *passim*; and André Géraud, 'Gamelin,' *Foreign Affairs*, XIX (January 1941), pp. 310-11.

members of the Sudeten *Freikorps*, an organization on German soil of Sudeten Germans now numbering ten thousand, were conducting attacks upon Czech frontier posts.

By late evening the British and French conferees had fashioned a joint program which embodied Lord Runciman's published recommendations, as well as the Fuehrer's demands. Thus, the Czechs were told, in what were euphemistically called 'Anglo-French Proposals,' that '... the point has now been reached where the further maintenance within the boundaries of the Czechoslovak State of the districts mainly inhabited by Sudeten Deutsch cannot in fact continue any longer without imperiling the interests of Czechoslovakia herself and of European peace.' Therefore, '... the maintenance of peace and the safety of Czechoslovakia's vital interests cannot effectively be assured unless these areas are now transferred to the Reich... either by direct transfer or as a result of a plebiscite.' The proposals suggested that the areas to be ceded to Germany should be those where the Germans constituted more than fifty per cent of the population, although there was no mention of what statistics were to be the basis for delimiting such areas. Furthermore, 'some international body including a Czech representative' should adjust the frontiers and 'might also be charged with questions of the possible exchange of populations...'. As for guarantee of the truncated Czech state, Great Britain declared herself willing 'to join in an international guarantee of the new boundaries' on the condition that this 'general guarantee' would be substituted for 'existing treaties which involve reciprocal obligations of a military character.' In the tone of a stern parent with strap in hand, the French and British Governments declared that they were doing their duty 'in the cause of peace' by thus demanding sacrifices of Czechoslovakia.

The Prague Government received these proposals on the afternoon of Monday, September 19, together with the request that it make a reply 'at the earliest possible moment,' because 'the Prime Minister must resume conversations with Herr Hitler not later than Wednesday and earlier if possible.' Although the Czechoslovak Government had foreseen something of what was coming and on the afternoon of September 18 had given warning that in such grave matters as the very existence of the country it could not accept responsibility for decisions reached without its participation, it was severely shocked by the Anglo-French proposals. The Czechoslovak Minister in Paris, Stefan Osusky, re-

marked bitterly: 'My country has been tried and condemned by a court which did not even summon us to appear. . . . Yet one of the judges is a pledged ally and we had hoped that the other was a powerful friend.'<sup>6</sup>

The Czechs were not the only ones to react in this way. The *New York Times*, for instance, on September 19 thought the terms 'incredible' until 'confirmed or explained in an official statement.' Although the British press was cautious, the *Manchester Guardian* declared that the plan was 'a sacrifice of Czechoslovakia and a surrender to Hitler,' and noted that even among Conservative newspapers only one was 'happy' about the situation. The Russians were bitter especially because France had not kept them informed of her actions, but nevertheless reaffirmed their intention to fulfill their obligations and in vain urged the French to join in talks with the Russian and Czech General Staffs.

In France, Daladier and Bonnet reported their London conversations to the Cabinet on September 19. The Premier explained that since Britain would not commit herself to aid France unless French integrity were directly menaced, the French Government had to support the presentation of the London proposals to Prague. Bonnet promised, however, that France would not exert more than 'friendly pressure' on the Czech Government. Several of the Ministers — especially Reynaud, Mandel, and Champetier de Ribes — regarded the proposals as outrageous, though none would assume the responsibility for actually rejecting them. Of the French press, at least one of the Right-Wing 'warmongers,' as those in favor of resistance were tagged by the appeasers, pronounced the Anglo-French plan to be a betrayal of both Czechoslovakia and vital French interests, while the Communists charged that it constituted a 'new capitulation to international Fascism.' The majority, however, accepted the plan. Typical of the feeling in Socialist quarters was Blum's statement that he was 'filled with mixed feelings of relief and shame.' The Rightist appeasers, some of them inspired by Bonnet, reverted to their April sentiments that Czechoslovakia was not worth fighting for, and one even contended that there was no treaty binding France to do so.<sup>7</sup>

The Prague Government, after discussing the situation all day Tuesday, September 20, neither accepted nor rejected the plan outright, but instead made a masterly reply to the British and

<sup>6</sup> Quoted by Dean, *Europe in Retreat*, p. 147, from the *London Times*.

<sup>7</sup> See Werth, *France and Munich*, pp. 263–66.

French. It pointed out that a decision concerning a change of frontiers could not be taken by the Government without a blow at the democratic structure of the country whose Constitution required the consent of Parliament in such matters. It called attention to the fact that numerous Germans in the Sudetenland had quitted the Reich to enjoy the 'democratic atmosphere' of Czechoslovakia; that acceptance of the proposals would paralyze Czechoslovakia and destroy the balance of forces in Central Europe; and that the guarantee proposed by Great Britain might more effectively be applied if the existing nationality conflict were settled amicably without the imposition of unacceptable sacrifices upon the Czech state. It declared its readiness to invoke the German-Czech Arbitration Treaty of 1925, which, though a part of the Locarno Pacts denounced by Germany in 1936, had been explicitly recognized by the German Government as recently as March 12 to be still in force. This reply, which not only succinctly summarized some of the crimes involved in the Anglo-French demands, crimes against democracy and against decency and security, but also indicated the Czech willingness to settle its difficulties with Germany by legal and peaceable means, was omitted from the British White Paper of September 28, 1938.<sup>8</sup>

Whatever the Prague Government said, as long as it did not accept Hitler's demands as conveyed by London and Paris, its reply would be unacceptable, because Great Britain and France had decided to hand over the Sudetenland to Hitler. At 2.15 A.M. on Wednesday — the day originally set for Chamberlain's second visit to Hitler — the British and French Ministers in Prague hurried to see Beneš in order to tell him that if Czechoslovakia did not unconditionally accept the Anglo-French proposals, she would stand before the world as solely responsible for the war which would ensue. They are also reported to have told him that Great Britain would not fight, and that France would not fulfill her treaty obligations, if the refusal provoked war. Beneš asked that these statements be put into writing, but was told that this was impracticable, because an immediate answer was needed in order to enable Chamberlain to hurry to Godesberg.

President Beneš, after days of nerve-wracking negotiation and discussion and sleepless nights of anxiety, was literally facing a terrible ordeal. If he rejected what was an ultimatum rather than merely 'friendly pressure,' he would incur the risk of plung-

<sup>8</sup> For text of the Czech reply, see Armstrong, *When There Is No Peace*, pp. 233-36.

ing his own people and probably the rest of Europe into a blood bath; if he accepted, he would doom the twenty-year-old Republic, for which he had worked so hard, to impotence, if not extinction. He felt certain of Russian help, although he was not sure that he wanted to risk making his country a second Spain or being branded 'red' by invoking the aid of the Soviets. He may have known that at least a minority in France, represented in the Cabinet by the three men who threatened to resign when they learned of Bonnet's part in the ultimatum, wanted to support him. On the other hand, since Great Britain's friendship, of which the Czechs had claimed to be certain during the previous two years, could not be counted upon, France would probably not move. Moreover, Hitler was ready to strike; Czechoslovakia and her dubious friends were not. Finally, Poland and Hungary were demanding with Reich backing that their minorities should receive the same concessions as the Sudeten Germans, thus indicating that two of Czechoslovakia's neighbors were more ready to profit from her misfortune than to aid her or take a neutral stand. Whatever his knowledge and course of reasoning on that fateful day, Beneš and the Prague Government decided that there was no alternative to acceptance of the Anglo-French plan.

Accordingly, the Czechoslovak note of September 21 explained that the Government accepted the proposals 'under extraordinary pressure' and 'despite the failure to consult the Prague Government in advance.' It further assumed that the two Governments would 'do everything' to apply their propositions 'with every safeguard for the vital interest of the Czechoslovak State.' The note also emphasized the British promise to join in a guarantee of the new boundaries, and declared that no invasion would be tolerated.

In Prague the news of the capitulation caused the milling crowds in the streets to converge toward the President's palace and toward the General Staff building shouting, 'Away with the Government!' 'Long live the Army!' 'Military dictatorship!' 'We want Syrový!' Appeals through loud-speakers by Cabinet members calmed the demonstrators, who gradually dispersed in the early hours of September 22 after a radio entreaty by General Syrový, the popular one-eyed Commander-in-Chief. At dawn, however, a general strike against capitulation occurred, and at 10 A.M. the resignation of the Hodža Government was proclaimed. Syrový, after forming a Government of National



Defense, declared before the cheering masses: 'I guarantee that the Army stands and will stand on our frontiers to defend our liberty to the last. I may soon call upon you here to take an active part in the defense of our country in which we all long to join.' Such towns as were already in Henleinist hands were quickly brought under the control of the Czech army, and President Beneš in an appeal to the nation pledged that the Government would resist any attempt to destroy the Czechoslovak state: 'If it is necessary to fight, we shall do so to our last breath. If we have to negotiate, we shall do so. But our beloved Czechoslovakia shall not perish.'<sup>9</sup>

While the Czechs were thus meeting the crisis bravely and hopefully, Prime Minister Chamberlain hurried to his second Canossa at Godesberg on September 22. Since the substance of Hitler's Berchtesgaden demands had been accepted, the Prime Minister expected to discuss the technical problems of transferring the territory and of delineating the new frontier. Instead, he experienced another Hitlerian 'Surprise.' The Fuehrer now declared that since the Anglo-French territorial proposals 'were too dilatory and offered too many opportunities for evasion,' he must now insist upon an immediate occupation by the German army of the areas subject to transfer. Moreover, he refused to join in an international guarantee of the new frontiers until the claims of other than the German minorities were met! Chamberlain admitted in his speech to the House of Commons on September 28 that he was perplexed by 'this totally unexpected situation.' He explained that he had gone to Godesberg expecting that since Hitler's demand for self-determination had been accepted in principle, he needed only to discuss proposals for putting it into effect. 'And it was a profound shock to me,' continued the Prime Minister, 'when I was told at the beginning of the conversation that these proposals were not acceptable, and that they were to be replaced by other proposals of a kind which I had not contemplated at all.' Accordingly, he broke off the discussion in order to think the new demands over.

Undoubtedly, Chamberlain perceived that Hitler was not content merely to acquire the territory he had requested, but that he also desired an immediate and humiliating surrender to a German threat of force. The Prime Minister also realized that this might so inflame British and French public opinion as to

<sup>9</sup> Paragraph based on G. E. R. Gedye, *Betrayal in Central Europe* (New York, 1939), pp. 452-55; Syrový and Beneš quotations, *ibid.*, pp. 454-55.

bring on a general war. Furthermore, since the Czechs had pointed out that they expected to retain control of the Sudeten regions until the new boundaries were fixed by an international commission, a German occupation without the formality of international delimitation might rouse the Czechs to resistance and thus set in motion the flywheel of Europe's war machine. Nevertheless, whether or not he faced the fact, Chamberlain had gone so far on the assumption that he could deal with Hitler that he could not now turn back without admitting his own error. Accordingly, the next morning he wrote the Chancellor a letter in which he said that 'there must surely be alternatives' to immediate forcible occupation. 'For instance,' he suggested, 'I could ask the Czech Government whether they think there could be an arrangement under which the maintenance of law and order in certain agreed Sudeten German areas would be entrusted to the Sudeten Germans themselves — by the creation of a suitable force or by the use of forces already in existence possibly acting under the supervision of neutral observers.'

Hitler replied that what interested him was 'not the observance of the principle that this territory is to go to Germany, but solely the realization of this principle, and the realization which both puts an end in the shortest time to the sufferings of the unhappy victims of Czech tyranny, and at the same time corresponds to the dignity of a Great Power.' Concerning the matter of leaving territory which really belonged to Germany outside the protection of the Reich, he declared that there was 'no international power which would have the right to take precedence over German right.' Saying finally that he was compelled 'to assume the insincerity of the Czech assurances' so long as they were not 'implemented by practical proof,' he warned that if Sudeten German rights were not guaranteed 'by way of negotiation,' Germany was 'determined to exhaust the other possibilities which then alone remained open to her.'

Poor Chamberlain! After two airplane flights to the Fuehrer, and after risking his position and his prestige in an effort to keep peace at any price, he was now apparently faced with Hitler's desire for war at any price. Briefly he replied to Hitler asking for a memorandum setting forth the new demands and a map showing the area to be ceded, and saying that acceptance or rejection of the new proposals was a matter for the Czechoslovak Government to decide. He also wished Hitler to renew his assurances that German troops would take no action 'to prejudice any

further mediation which might be found possible.' At a final interview lasting from 10 o'clock on the night of September 23 till 1.30 the next morning, Chamberlain received the memorandum and map he had requested only to find therein yet new demands. The memorandum, alleging that reports of incidents 'increasing in number from hour to hour' indicated a completely intolerable situation in the Sudetenland, called for the cession without delay of the territory within the fifty-per-cent demarcation line provided for in the Anglo-French plan of September 19. The area to be ceded was to be occupied by German troops by October 1 — the first mention of that date — and to be evacuated by all Czechoslovak armed forces and customs officials who were to leave it in its 'present condition' which meant, as an annex explained, 'without destroying or rendering unusable in any way military, commercial or traffic establishments,' including 'the ground organization of the air service and all wireless stations... the rolling stock of the railway system,... all utility stations... food-stuffs, goods, cattle, raw materials, etc....' Since 'the final delimitation of the frontier must correspond with the wishes of those concerned,' the German Government would permit an international commission to conduct a plebiscite before November 25, 1938, but the only persons eligible to vote would be those who 'were residing in the area in question on the 28th October, 1918, or were born there prior to this date.' Many Czechs, of course, had moved into the region after this date. There was no mention of an international guarantee of the new frontiers! <sup>10</sup>

Chamberlain promptly reproached Hitler for not responding to his peace efforts and declared that the Chancellor had prepared not a memorandum but an ultimatum. After that outburst, the conversation became quite friendly again, Chamberlain later asserted. Finally, just before saying good-bye — or was it *Auf Wiedersehn in München?* — Hitler assured the Prime Minister that the Sudetenland was his last territorial ambition in Europe and that he had no desire to bring non-Germans into the Reich.

A few hours before this friendly chat over the moribund Czechoslovakia, and two days before the Godesberg Memorandum was made public, the British and French Governments informed the Czechs that they 'could no longer take the responsi-

<sup>10</sup> For a lucid summary of the main differences between the Anglo-French plan and this Godesberg Memorandum, see Armstrong, *When There Is No Peace*, p. 86.

bility of advising' them for or against mobilization, but added that if mobilization took place, it would have to be on the responsibility of Prague alone. Prague immediately ordered mobilization. Similarly, in submitting the Godesberg Memorandum to the Czechs, on the evening of September 24, the British Government did not seek to influence their decision. Neither the British nor the French applied pressure upon Prague at this time. The Czechoslovak Government refused to accept the new terms, correctly representing them as 'a de facto ultimatum of the sort usually presented to a vanquished nation' and as depriving Czechoslovakia of every safeguard for her national existence while putting a terrible strain upon the population of the areas to be occupied. In resisting the demands, the Czechs declared: 'We rely upon the two great Western democracies, whose wishes we have followed much against our own judgment, to stand by us in our hour of trial.'

Disclosure of the Godesberg Memorandum angered the public in the British Empire because of Germany's utter disregard of Czech willingness to negotiate and Hitler's determination to force upon Prague cruel and humiliating terms. In South Africa, General Hertzog on September 25 declared that his Government would carry out its League obligations 'at any cost.' In Canada there was a growing feeling that if Britain resisted Nazi aggression, Canada would support her. These attitudes were the more significant because of the pronounced isolationism of both Dominions. Soviet Russia warned Poland on September 23 not to attack Czechoslovakia, and Litvinov at Geneva intimated that the U.S.S.R. might help the Czechs even if France did not. On the next day, whether because of Czech and Russian firmness, or Daladier's ascendancy over Bonnet, or simply a tardy realization of French interests, France began to display a new spirit of resistance. A complete change of views at Paris was reflected in the orders for partial mobilization and the Cabinet decision on Sunday afternoon, September 25, to oppose the Godesberg demands.

Meanwhile, Mussolini proclaimed his close alignment with his Axis partner, declaring at Padua, on September 24, that no solution that did not take into account the claims of all the minorities in Czechoslovakia would be acceptable and that Italy and Germany formed a single bloc. In another speech of the same day at Belluno, the Duce sneered at the democracies and, asking his audience 'Guns or Butter?' received the roaring reply:

'Guns!' Two days later at Verona, Mussolini expressed the hope that if a conflict arose it could be kept from spreading to all Europe. The Europe of Versailles, he added, 'was in its agony. Its fate is being decided this week. It is in this week that the new Europe may arise, a Europe of justice and reconciliation between peoples.' While Mussolini was correct about the 'agony' of Versailles, his vision of the future Europe of 'justice and reconciliation' proved to be myopic.

But Mussolini's was a voice from the wings, growing weaker with each utterance; the real centers of attention were London and Berlin. At the former, while Britishers were busily digging air-raid shelters in back yards and parks, Daladier and Bonnet arrived on Sunday evening, September 25, to be joined by Gamelin the next day. As a result of discussions with the British Ministers, the French obtained for the first time from Chamberlain a declaration that if a Franco-German war should result from French observance of her treaty obligations to Czechoslovakia, as Daladier still maintained would be the case, Great Britain would aid France. The conferees also discussed the means of preserving peace, and the French Ministers approved a suggestion that was conveyed by Chamberlain to Hitler on the same day that German and Czech representatives meet with a British mediator.

This proposal was carried to Hitler by Sir Horace Wilson, who flew to Berlin in order to prevent, if possible, any irrevocable step toward war by Hitler who was to make a public speech at the Sportspalast on Monday evening, September 26. When Wilson together with Sir Neville Henderson talked with Hitler, they obtained little satisfaction from him, but on the contrary may very well have been told that he could no longer wait until October 1 for the Sudetenland, but must move on September 28. At any rate, that startling bit of news was telegraphed to the Italian Government by its Ambassador just a half-hour before Hitler's address. Another voice from the wings had been added to Chamberlain's appeal for negotiation: President Roosevelt addressed a personal appeal to Hitler, Beneš, and the French and British Governments on the morning of the twenty-sixth, asking them to resolve their differences 'by the resort to reason rather than to force.' France, Great Britain, and Czechoslovakia immediately expressed their gratification and Beneš declared that he sought nothing better than arbitration in accordance with the German-Czechoslovak Treaty.

Hitler at the Sportspalast, though he did not declare specifically that he would march on October 1 if Prague did not yield to his Godesburg demands, insisted upon annexation of the Sudetenland by that date. He denounced democracy and the Czech state — ‘conceived as a lie and conducted as a swindle’ — vilified Beneš, warmly thanked Mussolini for his loyal friendship, and less warmly acknowledged Chamberlain’s efforts on behalf of peace. Hitler then promised for the second time in three days that he sought no further territorial acquisitions in Europe. ‘We do not want any Czechs,’ he said, but ‘our demand for the Sudetens is irrevocable.’ He spoke to a German people who were ignorant of the recent reactions in the outside world to the Godesburg proposals and who thought that the quarrel was a purely German-Czech affair. Despite the propaganda of weeks, they displayed no spontaneous enthusiasm even when Hitler later reviewed the troops on their way to Czechoslovakia where their blood brothers, according to the Fuehrer, were being tortured and killed by Czech fiends. In fact, after the Sportspalast speech, the German people for the first time began to glimpse the possibility of war, and they definitely did not like it.

Just a few minutes before Hitler’s speech and as a final warning to him, the British Foreign Office made public an ‘official declaration’ that in case Germany attacked Czechoslovakia, France would ‘be bound’ to aid the Czechs and Great Britain and Russia would ‘certainly stand by France.’ The full effect of this momentous declaration was dulled both by the deprecatory tone of the French appeasement press, apparently prompted by Bonnet, and by the radio address of Chamberlain himself on the following evening. The reaction in France was the more startling because she had been promised what she had always complained that England would not give. Yet Bonnet was reported to have said that the British declaration lacked confirmation, and even Daladier allegedly remarked that it came from a person ‘of no importance.’<sup>11</sup> When the leading statesmen of France lent themselves to such misrepresentation of a vital matter, what could be expected from Mr. Chamberlain? On the evening of September 27 he declared: ‘How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas-masks here because of a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing.’ How fantastic and incredible, indeed, that the head of the British Government, whose time for days had been

<sup>11</sup> See Armstrong, *When There Is No Peace*, pp. 96–99; and Werth, *France and Munich*, pp. 288–93.

taken up with the life-or-death struggles of Czechoslovakia, should speak of it in that way! Far away? Only an hour or so by airplane from the very Berchtesgaden where he had first met the Fuehrer! But worse than that slip was his statement near the conclusion of his talk: 'However much we may sympathize with a small nation confronted by a big and powerful neighbor, we cannot in all circumstances undertake to involve the whole British Empire in war simply on her account. If we have to fight, it must be on larger issues than that.' Perhaps he had in mind such larger issues as the very existence of England and the British Empire itself, which the results of his traditionalist view of limited liability and his appeasement policy compelled Neville Chamberlain to face only a year later. The encouragement for Hitler in both the French press and Chamberlain's pronouncement needs no comment.

By the time Chamberlain spoke over the radio, the armed forces of Germany, Czechoslovakia, France, England, and Italy were either mobilized or in the process of preparation for war. Sometime on September 27, Italy and Germany made arrangements to hold a conference concerning political and military collaboration in Munich at noon on September 29 — a conference which was later supplanted by quite another meeting. Also on the twenty-seventh, Sir Horace Wilson had a second interview with Hitler who proved to be as uncompromising as he had been in the Sportspalast. Meanwhile, Hitler replied to President Roosevelt that the decision as to peace or war rested with Prague, not with him.

The crisis reached its height in the night of September 27 and morning of September 28. Appeal followed appeal in efforts from the center of the stage and from the wings to avert war. Roosevelt addressed a second message to Hitler himself. On the morning of the twenty-eighth, Chamberlain sent messages to both Hitler and Mussolini suggesting a conference of Germany, Czechoslovakia, France, Italy and Great Britain. Bonnet apparently urged Halifax to secure the mediation of Mussolini, and sent his own Ambassador in Berlin to see Hitler. Roosevelt also urged upon Mussolini the continuance of negotiations. Thus it seemed that of a sudden, though probably not without a certain amount of backstage arrangement in which Bonnet may have played a stellar rôle, Hitler's junior partner became the center of the scene. Wednesday, it must be remembered, was the day on which, according to Italian Ambassador Attolico's warning,

Germany was going to march. In the morning Mussolini telephoned Attolico to go to Hitler and advise him to postpone the beginning of operations for twenty-four hours. This Hitler decided to do. Meanwhile, Lord Perth, British Ambassador in Rome, had communicated Chamberlain's proposal for a Five-Power Conference. Again Mussolini telephoned to Berlin. The results were announced to a tense House of Commons just as Chamberlain was completing his long explanation of what had taken place.

Some observers believed that the whole dramatic sequence had been prearranged in order to work up such a fever of excitement and anxiety among the British and French people as to bring instant acceptance of a peaceful dénouement. Such an explanation is too Machiavellian, certainly with respect to Chamberlain. Just as he was concluding his speech a paper was thrust into his hands. Glancing at it he said: 'That is not all! I have something further to say to the House yet.' He then announced that Hitler had invited him, with Daladier and Mussolini — but without any Czech or Russian, though he did not mention that fact — to attend a conference in Munich on the next morning, and added: 'I need not say what my answer will be!' The tension snapped; the House cheered Mr. Chamberlain; everyone seemed swept off his feet by this sudden prospect of peace. Only Sir A. Sinclair thought to remind the Prime Minister that he should see to it, not only that the Czechs carried out their obligations, but also that the Czech state in its new frontiers should have 'a chance of economic survival and complete freedom and independence'; and only the Communist, Gallacher, condemned the action of the Government and the House.

#### *5. Munich, September 29-30*

The next day at Munich, birthplace and shrine of the Nazi movement, Hitler, Chamberlain, Mussolini, and Daladier in two sessions settled the fate of the Sudetenland and laid the basis for that of all Czechoslovakia as well. Almost as an afterthought Prague had been asked to send two men to receive the dictum of the Big Four. Chamberlain after an introductory speech handed them the verdict in the early morning hours of September 30, while Daladier, tired and nervous, looked on. Then, yawning sleepily and obviously more anxious to get to bed than to discuss the death sentence of a nation, Chamberlain answered only a few questions before slipping off to his room.



The Four-Power Accord, signed in Munich at 1 A.M., Friday, September 30, differed from the Godesburg Memorandum only in minor particulars: evacuation of the Sudetenland by the Czechs and occupation by the Germans was to take place in stages according to regulations to be laid down by an international commission. There was a provision for an exchange of populations between the German and the Czech lands. Areas in which plebiscites might be held were to be occupied by 'international bodies,' and the final determination of frontiers was to be carried out by the international commission which was in fact to be a court of appeal for all questions arising out of the transfer of territory. Finally, instead of the long list of goods to be left by the evacuating Czechs, only existing 'installations' were to be left undestroyed, although the meaning of that word was not clear. Since the test of the Munich settlement was actually in its application and not in its wording, Hitler in the end received, not only as much as he had demanded at Godesburg, but even more, thus doubly giving the lie to Chamberlain's statement in the House of Commons on October 3: 'I think every fair-minded and every serious-minded man or woman who takes into consideration the modifications of the memorandum must agree that they are of very considerable extent and that they are all in the same direction. To those who dislike an ultimatum, but who are anxious for a reasonable and orderly procedure, every one of these modifications is a step in the right direction.'

In addition to the agreement concerning Czechoslovakia, Great Britain and France in an annex declared that they stood by their offer of September 19 to guarantee the new boundaries of Czechoslovakia against external aggression. Germany and Italy, for their part, promised to give a similar guarantee after the question of Polish and Hungarian minorities had been settled. Finally, the four Powers declared that the problem of the Poles and Hungarians in Czechoslovakia, if not settled within three months by agreement between the respective Governments, would form the subject of another meeting of the heads of the Governments of the four Powers. Again, both the guarantee of the future Czechoslovak frontiers and the manner of settling the Polish and Hungarian demands depended upon future acts, particularly of Germany and Italy, rather than upon the fair words at Munich. Even those words did not actually constitute a guarantee even on the part of Great Britain and France, but only a promise to guarantee under certain circumstances. Those circumstances never came to pass.

Finally, the agreement upon which Chamberlain principally rested his case for 'peace for our time' was the reciprocal pledge between himself and Hitler signed on September 30. After recognizing that the 'question of Anglo-German relations' was 'of the first importance for the two countries and for Europe' and that 'the agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German naval agreement' were 'symbolic of the desire of our peoples never to go to war with one another again,' they declared: 'We are resolved that the method of consultation shall be the method adopted to deal with any other questions that may concern our two countries, and we are determined to continue our efforts to remove probable sources of difference and thus contribute to assure the peace of Europe.' This in Chamberlain's eyes constituted his major triumph at Munich and was proof positive that he had been right all along in his methods of dealing with Hitler, for now the Fuehrer had promised Chamberlain himself, not through any intermediaries nor vague phrases, but in black on white, not only to live at peace with England, but to cooperate with her in bringing peace to Europe. The Prime Minister had apparently shut his eyes to the fact that all of Munich was a symbol of the successful use of naked force and that therefore any agreement at Munich could scarcely mean anything else than the continuance of settlement by force rather than by sweet reasonableness.

The Big Four were received with joy upon their return to their homes. Referring to Disraeli's famous remark after the Congress of Berlin in 1878, Chamberlain told the huge, almost hysterical crowd that greeted him: 'This is the second time in our history that there has come back from Germany to Downing Street peace with honor. I believe it is peace for our time.' The prophecy of the last remark has been so striking in its falsity that it has obscured the fact that Chamberlain and his advisers understood their history about as little as they did *Mein Kampf*. Not only might Disraeli turn in his grave at his successor's friendship with the most rabid Jew-baiter of centuries, but even Disraeli's 'peace' proved to have very little honor or peace in it. The crowd did not think of these things while it sang 'For he's a jolly good fellow' and 'God save the King.' Daladier made no such dubious comparisons, but, conscious of the part he had played in French disloyalty to her ally and her own ideals, was gratified by the unexpected welcome he received. It expressed the relief from the threat of war felt by the Paris populace. Mussolini was

greeted in Italy with frenzied enthusiasm. When Hitler arrived in Berlin, a public, which did not know the whole story and was inclined to give Chamberlain much credit for peace, expressed its genuine thankfulness for the gaining of ends which it approved without the bloodshed that it dreaded.

In Prague there was sullen despair. Given only until noon of Friday, September 30, in which to make reply to the Munich *Diktat*, the Czechs protested that the time was too brief, but that they had to yield nevertheless to a decision which, they said, had been taken 'without them and against them.' At 5 P.M. Premier Syrový announced over the radio: 'This is the most difficult moment of my life. I have taken the decision to save life and save the nation. Superior force has compelled us to accept.'<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, Czechs, Jews, German Social Democrats, and other non-Nazis fled from the Sudetenland in a panic. Those who could not leave at once could cogitate on Henlein's warning that political opponents would be imprisoned until they turned 'black.'

A few level-headed people throughout Europe and the world at once recognized that Munich was a fateful turning-point in the affairs of Europe. Alfred Duff Cooper, among them, resigned from the Admiralty in protest against Chamberlain's policy. Even Virginio Gayda said bluntly on October 1 concerning the beginning of a new era of peace and concord: 'Italy does not share the optimism.' The Moscow press, which had already complained of Russia's exclusion from the Munich Conference, referred to the settlement as 'the Munich crime against real peace.' Sober afterthought must confirm that judgment and must further subscribe to the witty summation of the political and moral degradation of Munich by Karel Capek, Czechoslovakia's best known author, who wrote as a 'Statesman's Guide':

Treaties are made to be kept by the weaker nations.

The efforts of statesmen have succeeded in completely maintaining collective insecurity.

In the interests of peace, energetic measures against the victims of aggression must be taken.

Localizing a conflict: leaving the victim to his Fate.

Liquidating a conflict: amputating his legs in addition.

No sacrifice made by others is too much for the cause of peace.

The Czechs have not been sold out — just given away for nothing.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> As quoted by Armstrong, *When There Is No Peace*, p. 125.

<sup>13</sup> *Living Age*, January 1939, p. 478.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### FIRST FRUITS OF MUNICH

ON THE morrow of Munich the peoples of Europe awoke with a very bad taste in their mouths. The Czechs, of course, knew full well that their republic was doomed. The Germans had for a brief moment between September 26 and 30 glimpsed the possibility of war and the resultant fear sobered their joy over another bloodless victory. The Italians were delighted that the crisis was over, but did not like the growing strength of Germany. The French and the British, although happy that they had escaped the horrors that they had been watching among the defenseless civilians of Spain, began to ponder the meaning of broken faith and the consequences of appeasement. The French people, however, in contrast to the British made relatively little fuss about the worst diplomatic defeat for France in a generation. The debate over the Munich policy in the Chamber of Deputies on October 4 lasted just six hours and only the Communists and one deputy of the Right, Kerillis, voted against the Government which now seemed bent upon reaction at home and appeasement abroad. With France thus docile and other European peoples lacking a free press and a parliamentary forum, England became the principal debating ground for the pros and cons of Munich.

#### *1. The 'Ifs' of Munich*

Even in England, because events occurred so rapidly and one Nazi gain tumbled upon another so quickly, the debate over Munich assumed the character of a review of the 'ifs' of the crisis rather than a means of shaping policy. The 'ifs' were primarily these: If London and Paris had stood firm would Hitler have fought and could the French and British Governments have relied upon their peoples and upon the Soviet Union to support them? If war had come, who would have been the stronger and what would have been the consequences for all concerned? If Munich was a genuinely peaceful settlement, why the insistence upon greater and faster rearmament? If Great Britain and France had

been unable to maintain Czechoslovakia's former boundaries, how could they hope to guarantee the strategically inferior new ones? If Hitler was not satisfied, where would he strike next, East or West? At bottom the questions which underlay all others were: If the Government for seven years had really sought to maintain and to strengthen collective security among the peace-loving nations including Russia instead of attempting appeasement as each crisis arose, would the Munich crisis have developed at all? And if Hitler had broken every promise he had made to date, could he be expected to keep those made at Munich?

The dramatic parliamentary debate of October 3-6, while it did not go into all these questions as explicitly as the editorial and letter columns of the newspapers, nevertheless revealed clearly the gathering strength of anti-appeasement sentiment and the false hypotheses upon which the Government rested its defense of the Munich settlement. While the Opposition offered powerful criticism of the Government, most striking and significant was the mounting revolt within Conservative ranks led by Duff Cooper who resigned from the Admiralty in protest against the Munich accord, and by Eden, Churchill, Cranborne, and Lord Cecil.

The spokesmen for the Government, especially the so-called 'inner Cabinet' composed of Chamberlain, Simon, Hoare, and Halifax, while they never failed to pay tribute to the noble Czechs and to express sympathy for their plight, based their case upon the maintenance of peace. They implied that Hitler was not bluffing and that Chamberlain's diplomacy had saved Europe from war and the Czechs from annihilation. They alleged that the British people and the Dominions were unwilling to fight for Czechoslovakia, dodging the question of whether or not they might have fought for their own interests. They implied that Russia could not be trusted and could not send effective aid anyway. They insisted, quite rightly, that without armament Great Britain would be at a disadvantage in further international negotiations, but averred that they were ready to enter upon discussions of disarmament when a general European peace, for which they were working, was secured. They argued that the former Czech boundaries could not be defended because the inclusion of a German minority made their maintenance impossible, but that now, after the Sudeten question had been eliminated, there was less risk in guaranteeing them than before. They taunted the Opposition with its pacifism and unwillingness to

back the rearmament necessary for a firm stand against aggression in previous years. Finally, the Ministers and their supporters insisted over and over again that Munich was a triumph of reason over force, and that this time Hitler could be trusted to keep his promises, and especially his accord with Chamberlain.

The critics could not deny that they themselves as well as the British people felt deeply thankful for peace, but they were inclined to believe that Hitler had only been bluffing and would not have gone to war if Great Britain and France had made a stand in time and had clearly demonstrated that they were ready to use force if necessary to prevent Nazi dictation of a settlement. They pointed out that neither Great Britain nor France had even tried to take advantage of Russian offers of support, and that the League of Nations had not been mentioned. Over and over again they returned to the charge that the Government itself did not believe in its own interpretation of Munich, else it would not continue to rearm; and, with greater cogency, they ridiculed the claim that the Munich settlement was fundamentally the result of negotiation rather than force. Of course, they had no trust in Hitler's promises, and they stressed the great extension of British obligations through the guarantee promised to Czechoslovakia whose weakened condition would more than offset the pretended advantage arising from the elimination of a discontented minority. Many speakers pleaded for an attempt at collective security either through a conference or through the League and for the inclusion of the U.S.S.R. in any future efforts to maintain peace. They insisted that Munich was no peace, but only an armistice that might yet give England time to prepare for resistance to further aggression, but only if the mistakes of the past were energetically repaired.

While nothing was said in Parliament about the question of relative military strength, the press both during and after the Munich Conference indicated clearly that many people considered this to be a fundamental consideration in assessing the causes and the results of the Munich triumph for Hitler. Although reliable figures on available man-power, machines, and especially airplanes cannot as yet be obtained, there is little doubt that German strength in all services tended to be exaggerated as the Sudeten question approached a crisis. That Germany sought especially to frighten Great Britain and France by the menace of an overwhelmingly powerful air force was apparent when it later became known that instead of possessing ten thousand planes

Germany probably had only about thirty-five hundred at the time of Munich.<sup>1</sup> Whatever influence the question of relative military preparation may have had upon the British and French, however, the decisive factor was not the risks involved in war, but the lack of willingness to take risks; for on the basis of comparative strength Great Britain and France — with the excellent Czech forces and with the possibility of help from Russia and even Rumania and Jugoslavia — should have gone to war in 1938 and should have kept the peace in 1939 when they were still behind Germany in rearmament and had no hope of immediate help from anyone but Hitler's next victim, Poland.

Another 'if' that was more thoroughly aired in the press than in Parliament was that concerning the Soviet. The U.S.S.R. had an excellent record throughout the German-Czechoslovak crisis for loyalty to its alliances and to League principles — a record that was as good as the French and British was bad. Litvinov alone had suggested an appeal to Article 11 of the League Covenant; he had proposed to France at least twice in September that they immediately consult and also initiate staff talks; he had given an unequivocal pledge of Soviet loyalty to its French and Czech Pacts on September 21, and a day or two later had given the impression that Russia might act even if France did not. Nevertheless, the supporters of Munich insisted that all this had been a bluff. They pointed out that War Commissar Voroshilov would hardly have gone to the Far East in the last week of September had the Soviet Government really planned to fulfill its pledges. More significant than such ratiocination were the arguments that the Red Army had been greatly weakened by the purges of 1937 and 1938 and that it could not get to Czechoslovakia anyway without violating the territory of Poland or Rumania. On the other hand, it would appear that actually there were Russian warplanes on Czech landing fields at the time of Munich; that whatever the excuses, the cold facts of the situation were that conservative elements in Czechoslovakia did not want Soviet help, and Great Britain and France made little effort to find out just what Soviet Russia could do, for they brushed aside every suggestion of staff talks and consultation. Little wonder that Litvinov, whose name was linked with the whole collective

<sup>1</sup> The allegation that Colonel Lindbergh lent himself to the German campaign or influenced the British and French Governments by overestimating the German air force and belittling the Russian lacks confirmation. For a convincing refutation of the charge, see Frederick Sondern, Jr., 'Lindbergh Walks Alone,' *Life*, April 3, 1939, pp. 64-75.

security effort of the Soviet, was expected to be one of the first post-Munich casualties or that the *Journal de Moscou* on October 4 significantly declared: 'France no longer has an ally in Europe except Great Britain.'<sup>2</sup>

While these and many other similar questions will never be settled to everyone's satisfaction and will thus remain 'ifs' of history, the moral issue involved in the method and manner of the Munich peace cannot remain in doubt. Chamberlain and his supporters tried to counter the charge of a 'shameful' treatment of Czechoslovakia and the accusation that the settlement was a *Diktat* rather than a negotiation by insisting that to keep the peace and to save Czechoslovakia from a bloody annihilation was not shameful; that Hitler's abandonment of his extreme Godesburg demands and his accord with Chamberlain proved that he was amenable to reason and could be dealt with. Their claims, however, that reason had triumphed over force and that Hitler's sincerity could be trusted were belied both by Hitler's action in the ensuing weeks and by the attitude of other nations to British and French loss of prestige. The smaller European countries, feeling themselves at the mercy of the Reich, plainly showed that they had little faith in Britain and France; Japan took Canton and Hankow in October, thus cutting off British Hong Kong from its hinterland, and seized Hainan a few months later despite British and French protests; the Arabs harassed the British in Palestine; and the Italian press ridiculed the French. Commentators argued that Germany had reversed the defeat of 1918. As one Frenchman pointed out, the French nation, 'in withdrawing behind the Maginot line, had lost the Descartes line, that intellectual tradition of being the European home and friend of liberty of the body and liberty of the mind.'<sup>3</sup> The same could have been said of England, but with the difference that a healthy and ever-growing body of public opinion refused to accept the Munich policy and eventually reversed it.

## 2. *The First Partition of Czechoslovakia*

In all fairness to Hitler whose realism was a shade more realistic than Chamberlain's, it must be admitted that he had every

<sup>2</sup> John S. Curtiss, 'Soviet Diplomacy Collapses,' *Events*, November 1938, pp. 355-58. See also R. W. Seton-Watson, *Munich and the Dictators* (2d ed. London, 1939), pp. 91-94; and Werth, *France and Munich*, pp. 333-35.

<sup>3</sup> Georges Duhamel, as paraphrased by D. W. Brogan, *France under the Republic* (New York and London, 1940), pp. 728-29.



reason to feel after Munich that England and France had given him a free hand in Central and Eastern Europe as the price they had had to pay for peace. To him the modifications of his Godesburg demands were so much eyewash. If Chamberlain and Daladier could fool themselves and their peoples into thinking that they had won a victory of 'sweet reasonableness,' there was no need for Hitler to worry about the International Commission composed of a German representative of the Foreign Office, the Italian, French, and British Ambassadors and the Czech Minister at Berlin. He could count upon Italian cooperation in any case. Moreover, the post-Munich apathy of the Czech people, the resignation of President Beneš on October 5, and the pressure of Poland and Hungary as well as Germany meant that while Prague might protest it could not resist German demands. Hitler appreciated, however, that he had to make hay while the sun shone and to keep up his program of mounting armaments, for, as he warned his listeners at Saarbruecken on October 9, if 'an Eden, a Duff Cooper, or a Churchill' replaced 'a Chamberlain,' war might be unleashed.

Treating the British and French members of the International Commission like 'vanquished in the presence of the victor,' the Reich proceeded to push through decisions that completely nullified all the Munich safeguards of which Chamberlain had boasted. While the German army between October 1 and 7 was occupying the four zones in Czechoslovakia granted outright at Munich, the Commission delineated the fifth zone on the basis of the 1910 instead of the 1930 census, thus giving Germany thousands of Czechs along with the Sudetens. On October 13, three days after this zone was occupied, the Commission announced that there would be no plebiscite in the remaining areas of mixed population, but that further questions concerning the Czech-German frontier would be settled in direct negotiations between the Reich and the Czechs. The definitive agreement, as Germany called it, was completed on November 20, along with one providing for the right of choosing German or Czech citizenship for those still left outside the frontiers of their respective countries. In addition, two agreements provided for the building, operation, and ownership by the Reich of a motor road between Breslau and Vienna forty miles of which ran across Czech territory, and the building of a canal across Czech land to link the Oder and the Danube Rivers and to form part of Germany's inland waterways system. The new boundaries, besides adding

to Germany over 738,000 Czechs and a total of more than 3,576,000 people, whose labor supply she needed badly, gave her a considerable proportion of Czech industries and millions of dollars' worth of military installations whose steel alone was a precious gift to the Reich.

Meanwhile, with the support of the Axis and especially of Mussolini, Poland and Hungary had been pressing their claims against Prague. The Poles on September 30 had presented a demand, backed with a threat of military action, for part of the district of Teschen by October 2. The area in question had been a 'sore spot' ever since 1920 when the Poles believed that the demarcation of boundaries had been unfair to them. Although Poland based her demands in 1938 upon the existence of a few thousand Poles on the Czechoslovak side of the border, her real motive was undoubtedly to prevent Germany from acquiring a region of great strategic and economic value. It commanded the railway lines through the Moravian Gap connecting Poland, German Silesia, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, and contained coal fields and iron and steel mills. Since Prague yielded to Polish demands on October 1, Poland occupied the area before the date set and immediately began its fortification against either German or Czech aggression. A final Czech-Polish settlement of November 1 added two more districts in Slovakia bringing Poland's total share of the partition up to a little more than 419 square miles and 230,000 people of whom nearly 135,000 were Czechs.

Hungary, too weak to act alone and reluctant to act with the Reich, did not present her final demands until October 2, when she asked for territory of predominantly Hungarian population according to the census of 1910 and for plebiscites in the remainder of Slovakia and Ruthenia. Since negotiations between Czechoslovak and Hungarian officials broke down on October 13, Hungary appealed to the signatories of the Munich Agreement in accordance with its terms and mobilized five classes of troops. With the tacit acquiescence of France and Britain, however, Hitler and Mussolini side-stepped even this provision for four-Power mediation and took matters into their own hands compelling Prague to make an offer which Hungary accepted only as a basis for further negotiations. When these broke down, Ribbentrop and Ciano handed down an award at Vienna on November 2, allegedly based on the ethnographical principle of the Munich Agreement, by which Hungary obtained over 4500

square miles of territory and about one million people of whom some 288,000 were Slovaks. This award, however, satisfied neither Hungary nor Poland, both of whom, in order to form a barrier against further German expansion, wanted to create a common frontier by the Hungarian acquisition of all of Slovakia and Ruthenia. Nevertheless, after a number of incidents along the Ruthenian border caused by Hungarian 'irregular' troops, Germany and Italy apparently put a stop to further trouble by warning both the Poles and the Hungarians that the Vienna award was final.

As a result of the German, Polish, and Hungarian excisions Czechoslovakia was reduced from a state of 54,250 square miles and over 15,000,000 people to an area of 38,500 square miles and a population of some 10,500,000. Had these changes taken place according to the vaunted principle of self-determination, they might well have represented an improvement in the Central European situation, but they were the result of dictation which handed over many Czechoslovaks to their neighbors. In consequence, according to figures given by the *Central European Observer*, November 25, 1938, Poland's minority was swelled to thirty-one per cent of her total population, Hungary's to ten per cent, and Germany's raised to nearly two million, which, to be sure, was but a negligible percentage of her eighty million total. Furthermore, the unity of the former Czechoslovak Republic, designated Czecho-Slovakia after December 1, was destroyed by the grant of autonomy to the Slovaks, who formed a Government under the premiership of Dr. Joseph Tiso. Ruthenia was also granted autonomy and renamed the Carpatho-Ukraine. Worst of all, these changes were accompanied by a retreat from democracy in its former strongholds of Bohemia and Moravia, which supplied additional proof of the ever-growing domination of the Third Reich.

### 3. Nazi Development of Lebensraum

Czech Foreign Minister Chvalkovsky, who had succeeded Kamil Krofta on October 4, visited Hitler at Berchtesgaden ten days later and gave him assurances, according to the communiqué, 'that Czechoslovakia would assume a loyal attitude toward Germany.' Within the country forced labor was introduced, Masonic lodges were dissolved, the Communist Party and press were suppressed, and newspapers censored. Rudolph

Beran, leader of the conservative Agrarian group that had already displayed Fascistic trends, founded a new Party of National Unity including within its membership all the former middle-class parties. Toward the end of November, Emil Hacha, a colorless individual who had been head of the Supreme Court Administration, was elected President in place of Beneš. On December 1, Beran succeeded General Syrový as Premier and two weeks later secured wide powers to govern by decree. Meanwhile, the Czech army had been purged and greatly reduced in size. In view of the obvious drift toward a pro-Nazi orientation, the French military mission left Prague and Schneider-Creusot sold its Skoda holdings to the Anglo-Czechoslovak Bank in which the Czech Government was interested. France and Great Britain, however, did come to the aid of the hard-pressed Government in January 1939 by arranging a loan of sixteen million pounds, whereas the Reich, Poland, and Hungary, despite their acquisitions of territory, had refused to assume any part of the Czechoslovak debt. Moreover, Germany even attempted to force the Czechs to give up some of their gold reserve for the redemption of currency circulating in the ceded areas. The ultimate place of Czechoslovakia in the Nazi scheme of things was even more clearly indicated by the admonitions of the Nazi press to develop agricultural products and not to rebuild industries that would compete with the Reich.

Although the 390,000 Germans remaining in Czechoslovakia had been given the right to choose their citizenship, the Nazis later forbade it with the obvious intent of leaving them within Czech jurisdiction in order to undermine further the independence of the Government. For example, in Bohemia and Moravia, Ernst Kundt established a Nazi party organization among the Germans, and demanded that the Czechs submit to Nazi cultural domination, cease all opposition to National Socialism, and enact anti-Semitic legislation. While the Czechs refused the last of these, they removed all restrictions against Nazi activity and all discrimination in the employment of Germans; they lifted all censorship on Nazi journalism and exempted the members of the party from military service. The Nazis obtained even greater advantages in Slovakia and the Carpatho-Ukraine to which the Reich press referred as shining examples for all Southeastern Europe.

The Carpatho-Ukraine seemed to be destined for a special rôle in the Nazi *Drang nach Osten* as a gathering-point for a Nazi-

inspired Ukrainian movement that would unite all the Ukrainians of Poland and Russia in one great German-dominated state. Adherence to such a policy was supposed to be the reason why the Reich forbade Hungary to seize Ruthenia. While Augustin Volosin, appointed Premier of the Carpatho-Ukraine by Prague late in October, created the National Ukrainian Union as the sole legal party, a semi-military body, known as the SITCH and trained in part by Reich military experts, worked for the cause of Ukrainian unification. Although the absurdity of the situation — a district of less than five thousand square miles and only half a million people aspiring to unify a great expanse populated by millions — was recognized by Volosin himself, the Ukrainian organizations and propaganda continued to flourish until snuffed out by the Hungarians in March.

After Munich the Nazis were only a little less active in the rest of Southeastern Europe than they were in Czechoslovakia. The acquisition of Austria and the Sudetenland brought the German share in the trade of Hungary, Rumania, Jugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Greece up to an average of forty-six per cent, although their share of Germany's foreign trade was increased to only twelve per cent. Besides intensified propaganda among the German minorities, whose young men had all become ardent Nazis, the Reich's activity in Southeastern Europe took two forms. The Nazis bought political support by working directly upon the peasants who constituted from seventy to ninety per cent of the population, stirring up a desire for land reform and promising freedom from interest and debt slavery through cheap industrial goods and cheap credits. The other method was to continue the contacts formerly developed by Schacht, Goering, and Neurath with Governments and business men. In October 1938, Reich Minister of Economics, Walther Funk, toured Belgrade, Sofia, and Ankara, discussing trade pacts and publicly advising these countries that they constituted a Balkan axis around which an economic region linked with Germany should be developed. He optimistically declared that the area between the Reich's frontiers and the Black Sea could supply most of Germany's needs and that Germany on the other hand could develop its resources. The aim to transform Southeastern Europe into a German *Lebensraum*, linked with the Reich, not only by a German monopoly of foreign trade, but also by a German-directed and financed exploitation of natural resources and development of rail, motor road, and river transportation, was clear to everyone including

Chamberlain who declared in the House of Commons on November 1 that Germany geographically 'must occupy a dominating position there,' and added: 'So far as this country is concerned we have no wish to block Germany out from those countries, or to encircle her economically.'

While Nazi propaganda among the German minorities and the peasants together with the activities of pro-Nazi native parties helped to keep Danubian and Balkan politics in a turmoil, and while Funk succeeded in making new trade or clearing agreements with Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Turkey, the Reich still encountered many difficulties. Rumania and Hungary, partly influenced by Polish and perhaps even by Italian encouragement, tried to crush pro-Nazi parties and to hold the German minorities in check, although Count Paul Teleki, who had succeeded Imredy as Hungarian Premier, signed the Anti-Comintern Pact at the same time as Manchoukuo on February 24. Yugoslav Premier Stoyadinovich, whose balancing policy was generally believed to be working in favor of the Nazis, was replaced on February 4 by Dragisha Cvetkovich, who hoped to strengthen Yugoslavia's position by solving the disrupting Serb-Croat conflict. Greece under Metaxas played off the Italians against the British and clung to Turkey where the death of Kemal Atatürk and the election of Ismet İnönü to the presidency in November caused no change in the policy of supporting the Balkan Entente and accepting loans from Great Britain to defray the expense of rearmament even while increasing trade with Germany. Bulgaria, most dependent of all the Balkan states on the German market, had won the nullification of restrictions upon her armaments and the provisions for demilitarization of her Turkish and Greek frontiers from the Balkan Entente on July 31, 1938, but continued to cause uneasiness by agitation for territorial revision of the peace treaties even though she contracted loans from France. In short, despite the death of the Little Entente, the Balkan Entente continued to function, and both Great Britain and France, to the annoyance of the German press, timidly sought to keep alive some hope that they might not completely abandon the Near East to German domination and exploitation.

No state in Eastern Europe was more directly affected by Nazi expansion than Poland, now bounded on three sides by the Reich and its satellites. Besides Poland's German minority and her six or seven million Ukrainians, either or both of whom under Nazi

inspiration might raise the cry for self-determination, there were such long-standing problems as Danzig and the Corridor. Less than a month after Munich, Ribbentrop told the Polish Ambassador that the time had come to settle all outstanding differences and proposed that the Reich should receive Danzig and an extra-territorial motor road across the Corridor in return for certain guarantees of Polish interests and a twenty-five-year non-aggression treaty. As if this were not enough cause for Polish uneasiness, Germany began, at the end of October, to dump thousands of Polish Jews at the frontier, while the Nazis in control of Danzig took no pains to conceal their confidence in the future. Beck, refusing to consider Ribbentrop's proposals, cast about for some means of strengthening Poland. Except for closer relations with Hungary, he made no progress with a scheme, launched in the previous spring, for a bloc of neutral states extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea. He flirted with Moscow, renewing the non-aggression pact with the U.S.S.R. on November 26, 1938, and securing a trade agreement on February 19, 1939. He asked Bonnet in vain to negotiate a spectacular renewal of the Franco-Polish alliance. Thus, he was compelled to make the best of his relations with Germany. As a result of a visit to the Fuehrer on January 5 and Ribbentrop's trip to Warsaw to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the German-Polish non-aggression treaty, the principles of that pact were reaffirmed and 'good-neighborly' relations outwardly maintained. Nevertheless, since Hitler and Ribbentrop continued to talk of the Danzig proposals as if future good relations between Germany and Poland were conditional upon their acceptance, the Polish Government was left with a sword of Damocles over its head.

#### *4. British and French Pursuit of Appeasement*

In Western Europe, London and Paris clung tenaciously to the policy of appeasement even though Hitler and Mussolini gave them little hope of success. As before, Spain proved to be one stumbling-block in the way toward better relations with both Rome and Berlin, for the Loyalists stubbornly refused to give up the fight and their supporters in France and England grew ever more vocal in pleading the Loyalist cause. Although Italy withdrew some ten thousand troops from Spain in October in accordance with plans adopted by the Non-Intervention Committee on July 5, 1938, the Loyalist Government began the dismissal of all

foreign volunteers and charged that not only were there large numbers of Italians left in Spain, but that Italy had actually sent fresh troops in greater numbers than those taken home. Moreover, since Italy's only hope of collecting some of the fruits of Munich for herself seemed to lie in Mediterranean acquisitions, she soon began agitating for territory at the expense of France. Then, too, in addition to Hitler's cavalier treatment of France and England in the application of the Munich accord to Czechoslovakia, Nazi officials and the German press renewed the agitation for the return of German colonies on the morrow of Munich. Furthermore, Hitler returned more than once to his Saarbruecken charge that the British Opposition was composed of warmongers, and thus fostered the suspicion that he was trying to dictate England's internal politics by insisting that peace depended upon Chamberlain's remaining in office.

Although this situation boded ill for the success of the Anglo-German Declaration of September 30, Bonnet heedlessly sought a similar French-German accord. Whether or not his policy of winning Hitler's friendship was directly responsible for Daladier's anti-Communist and anti-Labor policy, the two offered interesting chronological parallels. Hitler, Goering, and Ribbentrop found French Ambassador François-Poncet to be a ready collaborator in their efforts to convince Bonnet that the Third Reich desired peace and, as Ribbentrop declared, had no quarrel with France as long as France kept out of East European affairs. The basis for an agreement was laid by a talk between Hitler and François-Poncet at Berchtesgaden on October 18, when the latter called to take his leave before being transferred to Rome. Poncet's successor, Coulondre, continued the discussions after his arrival at Berlin in November with the result that Bonnet was able to announce the agreement upon terms on November 22. At the same time he assured Poland and Soviet Russia that this would in no way affect French relations with third parties, while he also took pains to inform Washington of the proposed accord and to obtain the blessings of Chamberlain and Halifax.

The final terms of the agreement included a declaration that Franco-German friendship was an essential element in maintaining peace in Europe, asserted that there were no more territorial questions between the two countries, recognized the Franco-German frontiers as definite, and provided for consultation upon all questions touching the two countries. This represented the high point of French appeasement efforts. Although there was



no mention in the formal declaration of a free hand for Germany in Eastern Europe, the appeasement press and some of Bonnet's own statements gave ground for suspecting that he had agreed to it. When Ribbentrop arrived in Paris on December 6, however, the words of the agreement, which he signed on the same day with Bonnet, and the press statements of both men sounded hollow, for the French populace and even many officials were indifferent about the accord and cool toward the German Foreign Minister. The reasons for this lay in the world-wide reactions to the pogrom being carried on in Germany and suspicions that while Germany professed to be France's friend she was stirring up Italian agitation against France and even seeking to separate Great Britain from France by encouraging British acquiescence in a Mediterranean Munich at French expense.

The murder of Ernst vom Rath, Third Secretary of the German Embassy in Paris, by seventeen-year-old Herschel Grynszpan, a German-born Polish-Jewish émigré, on November 7, was taken by the Nazis as the occasion for the most violent outbreak of anti-Semitism that the Reich had yet seen. Following an obviously organized burning of synagogues and demolition and looting of Jewish shops which aroused ill-concealed disgust among many Germans, the Government issued formal orders for the punishment of the Jews. These included the imposition of a billion-mark fine to be paid by the Jewish people whose wealth had been carefully inventoried the previous June, the exclusion after December 31 of Jews from all important economic and cultural activities, the requirement that the Jews themselves immediately repair all damage done by the Nazis during the riots, and the confiscation by the Reich of all insurance settlements arising from damage to Jewish property. Although the action of the United States in recalling its Ambassador from Berlin was the most striking evidence of disapproval, the humanitarian task of seeking to care for the German Jews, whom the Nazis seemed determined not only to fleece but to destroy, greatly hampered the French and British attempts at general appeasement. Schacht's plan submitted to the London Committee on German Refugees in December, which virtually amounted to a scheme for paying Germany to expel her Jews, did not endear either the Nazis or the appeasers to the growing body of indignant people outside of Germany.

Meanwhile, Chamberlain had taken the lead in a continued attempt to appease Italy. When he proposed to Parliament on

November 2 that the Anglo-Italian agreement of April should now be put into effect, he and Halifax not only clearly indicated that they were willing to regard the Spanish question as settled by Hitler's and Mussolini's promises to respect Spain's territorial integrity and to withdraw their men and material after Franco had won a complete victory, but they also ignored the fact that an Italo-French agreement had not been concluded as they had expected in the spring. Although the critics of appeasement pointed out that a settlement of Spanish affairs ought to mean either the end of the war or actual withdrawal of foreign combatants, the Prime Minister carried the day with the House of Commons by the usual large majority. Accordingly, Lord Perth and Ciano on November 16 at Rome completed the formality of putting the Anglo-Italian agreement into effect. The ceremony was preceded by the British recognition of the conquest of Ethiopia, and, in view of Chamberlain's statements, meant also that Britain acquiesced in Italy's helping Franco until he had won the Spanish war. France, who had begun steps some weeks before to renew negotiations with Italy, likewise recognized Italy's conquest when François-Poncet presented his credentials on November 19 to the 'King of Italy and the Emperor of Ethiopia,' but she was less complacent about the Spanish question which she by no means regarded as 'settled.'

Moreover, French susceptibilities had been aroused over the question of colonies as well as Spain. On November 16, the London Government announced that it was 'not contemplating the transfer of any territories under British administration.' The arrival in Germany on the very next day of South African Defense Minister Pirow, at the same time that the London *Daily Mail* revealed that he had a plan for the appeasement of Germany which involved the grant of territory from French, Portuguese, and Belgian holdings, suggested that the Government announcement should be read with emphasis on the word 'British.' For the benefit of Italy as well as Germany and perhaps England, Daladier soon announced that France had never considered any cession and could not do so. Nevertheless, many Frenchmen feared that Chamberlain might bring up the question when he visited Paris with Lord Halifax on November 23-24. This proved to be an unwarranted alarm, for whatever else the British and French Ministers may have discussed — the communiqué only mentioned the 'complete identity of views on the general orientation' of their policies — they did not apparently broach

the subject of colonies. Events in Italy, however, coupled with knowledge of Chamberlain's capacity for sacrificing others for the sake of appeasement, kept the French in a state of uneasiness.

### 5. *The Appeasers Falter*

On November 30, within a fortnight of the British and French gestures of good-will toward Italy, the Italian Deputies greeted the conclusion of Count Ciano's speech on foreign affairs with resounding cries of 'Tunisia, Corsica, Nice, Savoy!' This 'spontaneous' outburst, which had as a matter of fact been led by Roberto Farinacci, former Secretary-General of the Fascist Party, was followed by Italian press attacks upon France and by anti-French demonstrations throughout Italy. In reply to a vigorous protest from Ambassador François-Poncet, who had witnessed the demonstrations in the Chamber of Deputies, the Italian Government maintained that it was not responsible for them. When Lord Perth, in the course of a discussion with Count Ciano on December 3 concerning the forthcoming visit of Chamberlain and Halifax to Rome, called attention to the provisions of the Anglo-Italian agreement with respect to the *status quo* in the Mediterranean, he was likewise informed that the Italian Government was not responsible for the outburst. Since plans for the Rome visit were not cancelled, London was apparently satisfied, but France remained unconvinced by official denials. Daladier, therefore, on December 5 declared that France would 'ensure by every means absolute respect for all territory over which the national flag is flown' and announced that in January he would visit Corsica and Tunis.

In addition to the fact that 'spontaneous' demonstrations by Government deputies rarely occur in totalitarian countries, other factors led to the belief that the demands for French possessions were well planned, although it was not clear whether the Italian Government or the German bore the greater responsibility. The demonstrations in the Italian Chamber came on the same day as the general strike in France, the calling of which on November 25 had been followed in Italy, only a few hours later, by instructions to all the secretaries of the Fascist Party to discuss Corsica, Nice, and Tunis at party meetings. On the other hand, at least two reputable journalists, Pertinax in Paris and Augur in London, insisted that the demonstration in the Chamber was unexpected by Mussolini and had been organized by German agents in

Rome. Whatever the truth of this report, it was well known that according to the Nazi point of view the proper sphere for Italy was the Mediterranean where her ambitions would not collide with Germany's. Furthermore, in view of Mussolini's advocacy after Munich of a Four-Power Pact and in view of the British and French appeasement moves of November, it is possible that the Nazis inspired, if they did not organize, the Italian demonstration in order to prevent a too close collaboration between Italy, France, and Britain. The index of real trust and confidence between Hitler and Mussolini never rose very high above the zero mark; and it was not in the Reich's interest to have all conflicts among the Great Powers settled smoothly.

Whatever the underlying motives for the Italian shouting, the immediate effect was to heighten French suspicions of both Germany and Italy, thus rendering virtually useless the Ribbentrop-Bonnet exchange of December 6 and making impossible further steps in a rapprochement with Italy. The ultimate result was to turn the tide against appeasement, for while the French had accepted German victories in Central and Southeastern Europe with something like calm resignation, they were angered and aroused to resistance by what they considered to be Italian effrontery. They would show the Italians that France was not yet completely cowed by the dictators!

The upshot of press comments and exchanges between the Governments of France and Italy in December was a clarification of Italian demands and a return to that state of affairs which had existed before the Rome agreement of January 1935. Through semi-official statements of Virginio Gayda, Italy made it known that she wanted an improvement in the status of Italians in Tunis or the transfer of that territory to Italy, and that she would like to have Corsica, Nice, and Savoy; in addition, Italy wanted a share in the direction of the Suez Canal and a reduction in the tolls; finally, Italy sought either the possession or the control of Djibouti and entire management of the French railway between it and Addis Ababa. But when Ciano on December 17 informed François-Poncet that the Rome accord of 1935 could not be regarded as in effect, he failed to formulate any official demands which, indeed, were not forthcoming until March 1939. Meanwhile, France officially offered no concessions, but contented herself with a note on December 25, 1938, which pointed out that it was not France's fault that the League of Nations had imposed sanctions on Italy or that Italy had failed to ratify the

1935 Accord as France had done. Except for Bonnet's privately conducted discussions through Paul Baudoin with Mussolini and through Fernand de Brinon with Ribbentrop in February 1939, the French Government and public stood firm. The defenses in Tunis and at Djibouti were strengthened, while the self-confidence of the French was bolstered by Daladier's enthusiastic reception on his tour of Corsica and Tunis early in January.

France remained nervous, however, about the possibility of German schemes to aid Italy and about the reliability of British support. Chamberlain himself contributed to French fears when he stated in the House of Commons on December 12 that there was no obligation which could bind Britain to assist France in the event of an Italian aggression against her or her possessions. He, however, on the next night raised the hopes of the French when he addressed the Foreign Press Association. Whereas his condemnation of German press attacks upon Englishmen led the German representatives who had read the speech in advance to stay away from the dinner, he was most warm in his references to France. He said that 'in fact' British relations with France were 'so close as to pass beyond mere legal obligations,' since they were 'founded on identity of interest.' Moreover, Bonnet stated a few days later that France could count upon Britain in all eventualities.

Still France wanted to make sure that Chamberlain and Halifax would not be persuaded to 'mediate' between France and Italy when they visited Rome in January. Accordingly, Daladier and Bonnet invited them to tea on January 10 when they passed through Paris on their way to Rome. The result was apparently satisfactory, for a communiqué attested that the 'general identity of views . . . was fully confirmed.' Also at the conclusion of the Rome visit an authorized British statement declared that 'no new commitment, arrangement or agreement' had been 'asked for or entered into by either government.'

This admission of negative results from the Rome visit raised the question why Chamberlain and Halifax had gone to Italy at all. When the trip had been first publicly announced on November 28, the atmosphere created by the application of the Anglo-Italian agreement, by the virtual conclusion of the Franco-German accord, and by the initial steps toward better Franco-Italian relations might have encouraged Chamberlain and Halifax to believe that in January they could complete arrangements for a general all-around appeasement, perhaps even a satisfactory Four-Power Pact. The cry of 'Tunisia, Corsica, Nice, and

Savoy!' on November 30, however, had thrown a monkey-wrench into their appeasement machinery. Furthermore, in addition to its constant agitation for the return of its former colonies, the Reich Government officially announced at the end of December that it would enlarge its fleet and in particular build up to the British level in submarines. Meanwhile, indignation in England over Hitler's treatment of the Jews and of Czechoslovakia and concern voiced even by government officials over the German penetration of Southeastern Europe was steadily increasing. Bye-elections and continued criticisms from the Opposition and from men like Eden and Churchill all indicated that the Munich policy was nearly bankrupt. Chamberlain himself hinted in December and January that he had a few doubts of the success of appeasement even though he still doggedly persisted in trying to talk with the dictators.

Either because Chamberlain had learned a little caution, or because Mussolini was less successful at the bullying game than Hitler had been, the Rome talks failed to produce another Munich. On the other hand, they failed to change one whit the chosen course of Mussolini. Italy remained loyal to the Berlin-Rome Axis and to the terms of the Anglo-Italian agreement, saw no chance for the time being of better relations with France, would not guarantee Czechoslovakia's new frontiers until certain 'internal' problems such as the form of the constitution were settled, believed that disarmament should be discussed at a more favorable time, and again promised to withdraw from Spanish soil when the war was over. Since the British Government had already acquiesced in Italian aid to Franco, there was not much in these points with which Chamberlain could quarrel. He, of course, emphasized the close cooperation between Britain and France and 'regretted' the strained relations of Italy and France, fresh evidence of which appeared before he left Rome when *Il Tevere* remarked: 'Now we can spit in the face of these vile French . . . none of them excluded.' Perhaps, as one little step toward appeasement, he promised to advise a more conciliatory attitude on the part of France, for it was reported from Geneva that Lord Halifax suggested to Bonnet, when they met for the League Council meeting on January 15, that he satisfy some of Italy's claims with respect to port facilities at Djibouti, tolls on the Suez Canal, and the status of Italians in Tunis.<sup>4</sup> Whether

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Chamberlain, *In Search of Peace*, pp. 251-52; Werth, *France and Munich*, pp. 413-14; *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, Jan. 20, 1939, p. 50; *Foreign Policy Bulletin*, Jan. 20, 1939, p. 1; and *K-H News Letter*, Jan. 20, 1939.

that was true or not, the French at this moment were now becoming far more worried over the outcome of the struggle in Spain than over Mussolini's demands.

As a result of General Franco's drive toward Barcelona in December and January, the French began again to speculate on the results of a Nationalist triumph. They had much less faith than the British appeared to have in the promises of Mussolini or in the ultimate good-will of General Franco. On January 15, the executive committee of the Radical Socialist Party of which Daladier was leader passed a resolution urging the Government to consider carefully the grave danger to France created by the Italian intervention in Spain. This seemed to indicate that Daladier had been impressed by Blum's arguments on the previous day for the sending of food and armaments to Barcelona. On the appeasement side, however, was the fact that Chamberlain's message to Daladier, conveyed by the British Ambassador on January 14 after the Prime Minister's short stop in Paris on his way back from Rome, emphasized Mussolini's promises to withdraw his forces now 'in Spain, in the Balearics, and in other Spanish territory after the final victory of General Franco.' Bonnet, whose name had been booed at the Radical Socialist meeting, pulled all the wires at his command as soon as he returned from Geneva in order to keep France from taking any steps to help Barcelona. Furthermore, reports that Ciano had told the British that Italian troops would leave Spain, not at the end of the war, but only after Franco's control had been consolidated, were branded by the appeasement press as fabrications. Although the Government did announce that it would send food to Barcelona, only a paltry amount actually reached that city. At last, after a six-day discussion in the Chamber, which was a French counterpart of the British Munich debate, Bonnet and his supporters won out, for when it was too late to take any effective action anyway, Bonnet announced on January 26 that France would continue her policy of non-intervention in Spain and appeasement elsewhere.

The fight was nearly over in Spain, although the Loyalists had carried it on to the bitter end with all the odds against them. On January 23, 1939, General Franco's drive through Catalonia put Barcelona in grave danger. On January 26, the city fell and within two weeks all of Catalonia to the French border was in Franco's hands. While President Azaña and a majority of the Loyalist Cabinet wanted to open peace negotiations, Premier

Negrín and a rump Cortes decided to fight on. The game was indeed played out, however, for France and Great Britain formally recognized General Franco on February 27, thus foreshadowing the downfall of the Republic. On March 5, the Negrín Government was replaced at Madrid by a National Defense Council with General Miaja at its head. Although Negrín and his Ministers fled to France, the Communists and other Negrín supporters carried on a six-day revolt against the Council while it attempted to obtain honorable terms from Franco. At length, on March 28, General Franco obtained the unconditional surrender of Madrid upon which he had insisted and with it the military mastery of all Spain.

While the National forces, now dominated by the Fascistic Falangists, proceeded to wipe out all political opponents by means of wholesale arrests and executions, Franco gradually regularized his international status. On April 1, the United States, following similar action by Brazil, Ecuador, Panama, and Paraguay, formally recognized his Government. Franco had already signed the Anti-Comintern Pact, the ticket to totalitarian respectability, on March 27. This act and his earlier cavalier treatment of a French envoy, Senator Bérard, together with the failure of Germany and Italy immediately to withdraw their forces, caused uneasiness among the appeasers. Mussolini and Hitler, however, staged triumphal homecomings in June for the bulk of their Spanish expeditionary forces and gave the lie to their own previous statements by boasting about their part in winning the war. In February 1941, Mussolini finally presented his friend Franco with a bill for \$275,000,000, claiming that this was a hundred million less than he had actually spent. The final battles of March 1939, the problem of refugees, and the question of Franco's ultimate allegiances failed to attract the attention that they deserved, however, for Hitler was again on the march and Britain and France were absorbed with the reversal of the appeasement policy that had been so disastrous for republican Spain.

### *6. The Second Partition of Czechoslovakia*

Beginning with the announcement on December 30, 1938, that Germany would build up her fleet, Hitler had kept the British and French Governments in alternating moods of jitters and optimism. Less than a month later and within a week of the



British Ministers' return from the Rome visit, Schacht was replaced as President of the Reichsbank by Funk, thus finally completing the radical Nazi control of the Reich's economic structure. At the same time, Nazi press attacks on the Netherlands following a frontier incident and paralleling the expedition of Italian reinforcements to Libya led to reports that the Axis was planning simultaneous moves against the Low Countries, possibly also Switzerland, and the British or French possessions. Moreover, the Reich succeeded in getting Hungary's promise to join the Anti-Comintern Front while German emissaries went to Moscow to seek improved trade relations and Ribbentrop in Warsaw cordially celebrated the fifth anniversary of the German-Polish Pact. Following a revival in activity of the brown-shirted Nazi storm troops and the dissolution of the non-Nazi, conservative, and aristocratic Reich League of German Officers, Minister of Agriculture Darré reflected the Nazi mood when he asserted on January 27 that Germany, far from being 'saturated and bourgeois,' was ready to risk war if necessary in order to realize her aims.

Both Bonnet and Chamberlain at first reacted in characteristic fashion. The French Foreign Minister on January 26 praised the December 'good-neighbor' accord with Germany, declared that France wanted friendly relations with Italy, and asserted that French prestige was untarnished. At Birmingham two days later, Chamberlain touched upon the horrors of war and reviewed his successful efforts on behalf of peace. At the same time, he struck a note that he had begun to sound faintly in the previous month when he asserted: 'We cannot forget that though it takes two to make a peace, one can make a war.' Then, after stressing the defensive nature of British armament and the progress in the rearmament, he referred to President Roosevelt's message to Congress early in January and agreed with him that 'a demand to dominate the world by force . . . would be a demand . . . the democracies must inevitably resist,' although he hastened to add that he did not believe 'any such challenge' was 'intended' and concluded with his usual remarks about his pursuit of peace and conciliation.

These French and British statements were intended to soothe Hitler before his scheduled Reichstag talk on January 30. Whether or not they had any influence on him, his remarks sounded a bit more restrained than his talks of the previous year. He repeated his former attacks on Versailles, Beneš, British and

American 'warmongers,' and Jewry. He reviewed his triumphs of the past year and hoped for 'a long peace.' He emphasized Germany's solidarity with Italy and her collaboration with Japan against Bolshevism and insisted upon the ultimate return of the German colonies that had been 'stolen' from her. In what was undoubtedly intended as a hint and a warning to the appeasers, Hitler declared that either 'the riches of the world' would be 'divided by force' or the division would be 'based on equity and consequently on common sense. . . .' In the meantime, eighty million Germans would have to do the best they could with their resources, although he added another reminder for the appeasers when he said that Germany must 'export or die.' His failure to mention either the Soviet Union or the Ukraine seemed to confirm the impression that he had abandoned the *Drang nach Osten* in favor of a drive against the West.

In response, therefore, France and Britain gave some evidence of a stiffening attitude. On January 31, Chamberlain declared that what the English wanted was not only words about peace, but some evidence of a desire for it such as a willingness to negotiate a limitation of armament. On February 6, he made a flat statement of Anglo-French unity, saying that 'any threat to the vital interests of France, from whatever quarter it came, must evoke the immediate cooperation of this country.' When the Axis press cast doubts upon the seriousness of this pledge, Halifax repeated it on February 23. Meantime, the British White Paper on rearmament indicated that the Government had raised its original 1936 estimate of a billion and a half pounds to be spent before the end of 1942 to more than two billion and intended to increase its expenditures in the coming year over those of 1938-39 by sixty-six per cent. Also it became known on February 18 that France had reoccupied the territory in East Africa ceded to Italy in 1935 and that the French and British fleets would hold joint maneuvers in the Mediterranean beginning on February 23. These evidences of democratic stiffening against Axis threats, however, were primarily directed against Italy and their effectiveness was vitiated by the parallel policy of kowtowing to General Franco, by Bonnet's personal and private appeasement missions to Mussolini and Ribbentrop, and by the Anglo-French failure to resist Japanese expansion in the Far East.

Furthermore, France and Britain did nothing to destroy Hitler's belief that they had given him a completely free hand in the East. Worse than that, their policy actually encouraged

him. Great Britain, mindful of Hitler's dilemma of exports or death, of the German trade expansion effort in Southeastern Europe, the trade mission to Russia, and a commercial agreement with Italy of February 13, tried to revive the economic appeasement policy that had been allowed to drop after the failure of the van Zeeland mission of 1937. At bottom, appeasers felt that unless they helped Germany to shift her economy from a war preparation basis to a peaceful one, her economic difficulties would drive her into further desperate measures. Accordingly, Ashton-Gwatkin, of Runciman mission fame, went to Berlin late in February to explore the ground while arrangements were made for the President of the Board of Trade and the Secretary of the Overseas Trade department to follow in March. At the same time, the Federation of British Industries was discussing with German firms a cartel agreement which was actually signed on March 16. Thus the Munich spirit was still alive.

Of more direct bearing upon Hitler's plans to wipe out Czechoslovakia was the failure of France and Britain to insist upon the guarantee that had been promised at Munich. Chamberlain and Halifax broached the subject at Rome in January without obtaining any satisfactory reply from Mussolini. At the beginning of February, perhaps as a result of a warning from Prague that Hitler was planning to take over Bohemia and Moravia, both the British and the French Governments asked Berlin to state its views concerning the promise at Munich and to join in an international guarantee of the Czechoslovak frontiers once the question of Polish and Hungarian minorities had been settled. An indirect answer was contained in a report of February 18 from the French Minister at Prague which stated that Germany was withholding a guarantee until the Czechs fulfilled such conditions as a complete alignment of foreign policy with Berlin including adherence to the Anti-Comintern Pact and withdrawal from the League, drastic reduction of military effectives, transference to the Reich of part of the Czech gold reserve, promulgation of anti-Semitic laws, and the opening of Czech markets to German industries in the Sudetenland. Berlin made a direct reply to the British and French query on February 28 which explained that it could not guarantee the Czechoslovak frontiers because relations between Czechoslovakia and her neighbors and conditions within the country were still far from satisfactory. Furthermore, the German reply very strongly hinted that London and Paris should not intervene in Central

Europe. French Ambassador Coulondre called the document 'anything but reassuring as to the immediate intentions of Hitler's policy towards Czecho-Slovakia.' Yet the British Government on March 10 issued an authoritative story to the press that all was serene in the European world: an adjustment of Italian-French difficulties was expected soon; Anglo-German trade talks were likely to have good results; and it might be possible to convoke some kind of disarmament conference before the end of 1939. In the face of accumulating rumors and the declaration by President Hacha of martial law in Slovakia on the very same day, such optimism must have been based upon reports from someone in Mars. Perhaps the Martian was Hitler himself.

Hitler, who had made up his mind to get Bohemia and Moravia, found the situation not only in Europe but also in the hyphenated Republic made to order. Ruthenian and Slovak agitation for greater independence from Prague's control reached a point early in March where President Hacha felt compelled to intervene. On March 6, he effected the ousting from the Ruthenian Cabinet of a pro-Nazi, who straightway hastened to Berlin. On March 10, Hacha dismissed the Slovakian Cabinet, declared martial law in many towns, arrested some Separatist leaders, and disbanded the Hlinka Guards, a Slovak autonomist organization suspected of planning a pro-German *Putsch*. Joseph Tiso, deposed Premier, imitating Seyss-Inquart's action exactly a year before, appealed to Hitler to restore order. On March 13, Tiso flew to Berlin. Meanwhile, the German press, following a pattern that was by this time quite stereotyped, launched an attack upon the Czechs. Hitler then ordered Hacha to convoke the Slovak Diet. This body, by a majority of forty out of sixty-three members present, on March 14 voted for independence and at the same time set up a government with Tiso again as Premier.

On the same day, when a number of minor clashes occurred between Czechs and Germans, Hitler summoned Hacha and Foreign Minister Chvalkovsky to Berlin, where the Fuehrer, Ribbentrop, and Goering threatened them with the immediate bombing of Prague if they did not accept the independence of both Slovakia and the Carpatho-Ukraine and place Bohemia and Moravia entirely at the disposal of the Reich. Early on the morning of March 15, after hours of gruelling under which Hacha was reported to have fainted more than once, the Czechs signed an agreement 'placing with entire confidence the destiny of the Czech people and the Czech country in the hands of the

Fuehrer of the German Reich.' The Fuehrer 'accepted this declaration and expressed his resolve to take the Czech people under the protection of the German Reich, assuring it of an autonomous development suited to its character.' German troops had already occupied two Czech cities before Hacha arrived in Berlin one hour late because of German troop movements into Bohemia. They occupied Prague on the morning of March 15 and the rest of Bohemia and Moravia on the same day while sullen, weeping crowds looked on, their only show of resistance taking the form of jeers and snowball throwing. On March 16, Hitler proclaimed a protectorate over Bohemia-Moravia and a few days later appointed Baron von Neurath the Reich Protector. Also, on March 16, Hitler took over the 'protection' of Slovakia, a move which was formalized by a treaty, signed on March 23, that brought Slovakia almost as completely within the German orbit. Meanwhile, Hungary annexed the Carpatho-Ukraine and even took a small portion of Slovak territory. Although this was not apparently a part of the original Nazi plan, Germany did not interfere, but allowed Hungary and Poland thus to gain common frontiers to the east of Slovakia.

Outside Central Europe nothing like the crisis which had preceded the Munich settlement occurred. Even though British Ministers had declared in the parliamentary debates of October 1938 that the guarantee of Czechoslovakia's new frontiers was in force, Chamberlain answered a question concerning it on March 14 by saying that the 'proposed' guarantee was one against aggression and that no aggression had yet taken place. Two days later, he argued that the guarantee was not in force because it had never been ratified by the Powers concerned. He announced, however, that the moment was 'inopportune' for the trade discussions with Germany that had been planned. The French and British Ambassadors at Berlin expressed their anxiety concerning the course of events on March 14, and finally on March 18 carried out instructions to protest against the annexation of Bohemia-Moravia and to declare that their Governments could not recognize the legality of the new situation in Czechoslovakia. The United States and Soviet Russia likewise registered their protests. Meanwhile, Chamberlain at Birmingham on the night of March 17 denounced Hitler's disregard of his pledges and thus sounded the death-knell of appeasement.

In answer to the protests, Germany gave the well-worn excuses. Her story was that a revolt in Slovakia and wild 'excesses'

in Bohemia including attacks on Germans caused Hacha voluntarily to accept 'protection.' The smooth and swift pace of occupation suggested, however, that Hitler had been preparing the move for a long time. Probably the pressure of economic difficulties in the Reich, the existence of Italo-French tension, as well as indications that Great Britain, Poland, and Soviet Russia would stand aloof, determined the time of the move. In January 1939 the exports of the older portion of the Reich were some nineteen million marks below the monthly average of 1938 and about eighty million below that of 1937. As a result of this decreasing export trade, the Reich had been compelled to cut imports sharply despite the need for raw materials and food. Moreover, since the Greater Reich including Austria and Sudetenland had an even more unfavorable trade balance, Hitler's acquisitions of 1938 had actually made the German position with respect to trade and availability of foreign exchange worse than before.

In seizing Prague he had gained eighty million dollars' worth of gold from the Czech National Bank, another twenty-four to thirty millions of Czech money held in London in the name of the Bank of International Settlements, and finally several million dollars' worth of foreign exchange in the form of Czech assets held abroad by individuals and corporations. In addition to a total of more than two hundred million dollars in gold and exchange, the Reich had obtained a food supply with which to fill the needs of the Sudetenland and Vienna. Furthermore, Hitler's army, according to his own account, profited to the extent of 1582 airplanes, 469 tanks, 2175 light and heavy artillery pieces, 501 anti-aircraft guns, thousands of machine guns, pistols, and rifles, together with billions of rounds of ammunition and shells, as well as the arms factories at Pilsen and Bruenn.<sup>5</sup> All this, especially the tanks, proved very useful against France a year later. As in the case of Austria, however, the new area threatened to increase the eventual drain on the Reich's gold reserves, for Bohemian-Moravian economy depended largely on foreign trade which quickly dropped off after annexation to the Reich. Hitler, in other words, had gained enough economic assets to last him about six or eight months, after which the pinch would again be felt. Finally, he had destroyed the last valid excuse offered for him by the appeasers who could no longer fool themselves or

<sup>5</sup> Speech of April 28, 1939, German Library of Information, *Exchange of Communications Between the President of the U. S. and the Chancellor* (New York, 1939), p. 19.

others into believing that Hitler was solely interested in self-determination for oppressed Germans. They now had to admit that he was determined to establish German hegemony over Europe by the use of force.

### *7. The Axis Mops Up*

While London, Paris, Warsaw, Moscow, and every little capital on the Continent were buzzing with excitement over the seizure of Prague and Chamberlain's new policy of resistance, Hitler and Mussolini proceeded to clean up some odds and ends before resistance could be effectively organized. On March 22, the Fuehrer forced Lithuania to cede Memel, the small area that had been detached from East Prussia by the Treaty of Versailles and had been the cause of recurring crises ever since. On March 23, after resisting German pressure for several weeks, Rumania signed a far-reaching trade and economic agreement which brought her into close collaboration with the Reich. Rumanian agricultural, industrial, and raw-material resources were to be developed under German direction in order better to serve the needs of the Reich. This was only a partial victory, however, for on March 27 the Rumanian Premier declared that Rumania was willing to conclude similar agreements with other countries and would fight if her integrity were threatened.

While Franco was joining the Anti-Comintern Front and completing the last stages of his conquest of Spain, Mussolini alternately rattled his saber and offered olive branches to France. He invited her on March 26 to initiate discussions concerning his demands which he announced for the first time to be Djibouti, the Suez Canal, and Tunisia. But Daladier, whose position at home had been strengthened by the parliamentary grant on March 19 of full decree powers until November 30, was in no mood to conciliate the Duce. He pointed out in a reply of March 29 that it was up to Italy who had abrogated the agreement of 1935 to make proposals in the spirit of that agreement. He repeated his former statements, however, that France would not cede a foot of her land or one of her rights. Finding himself balked in his pursuit at the expense of France of easy compensation for Hitler's gains, Mussolini turned suddenly to the tiny Kingdom of Albania, invaded it on Good Friday, April 7, and officially took it under the protection of Italy on the next day. After the flight of King Zog and his Queen, an Italophile group

of Albanians accepted the union of the Italian and Albanian crowns, thus making Victor Emmanuel twice a king as well as once an emperor. There was some question whether or not Mussolini's Albanian coup was directed against a possible German drive into the Balkans, but the net result was to strengthen his position both in the Adriatic Sea whose outlet he now commanded on both sides, and also in the Balkan Peninsula where he was better situated to put pressure on Yugoslavia, Greece, and Bulgaria.

London and Paris deplored all these Axis triumphs, but were as yet in no position to stop them. Their efforts, however, to erect an anti-aggression bloc meant that Mussolini's Albanian coup was the last 'peaceful' conquest of the totalitarian states in Europe.



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### THE COMING OF THE WAR, 1939

THE shift from appeasement to resistance which finally brought the declaration of war in September 1939 was not a sudden change. Ever since Munich, public opinion had been slowly awakening to the character of the German triumph and its implications for the future. Hitler's march into Prague constituted a final, striking proof that the issue was not the self-determination of German peoples, nor a mere patching of the 1919 peace settlement, but the basic principles of both domestic and international politics. Were Germany and her partners with their totalitarian and economic concepts to dominate Europe and the world or were order and justice, secured by reason and conciliation, to triumph? Munich, representing the epitome of appeasement, was based upon the hope that Hitler and his allies would accept the method of reason and conciliation once their interests were safeguarded and respected. The march into Prague destroyed that hope. While the British and French Governments still clung to the belief that they would not have to resist aggression to the point of war, and thus still made an occasional gesture of appeasement, they were compelled to build a diplomatic and military bulwark against totalitarian attack.

#### *1. Anglo-French Stand Against Aggression*

In addition to the feeling that the principles of law and order were at stake, the conviction began to spread even among former British appeasers that the freedom and the security of England and France were also involved. Undoubtedly, Hitler's sanction of the Hungarian seizure of the Carpatho-Ukraine which he had previously vetoed convinced those who had thought that he was going eastward under the banner of a pan-Ukrainian movement that he was now planning to turn to the West. Moreover, there was a general feeling in England that appeasement had not only resulted in the yielding of important bastions like Czechoslovakia to the totalitarian states, but that it

had also prevented Britain from rearming as rapidly as she should. Finally, people were getting tired of the crisis atmosphere that appeasement only seemed to perpetuate. Although Chamberlain himself did not apparently appreciate these points of view, a revolt in his own Conservative Party headed within the Cabinet by Lord Halifax compelled him to make an about-face and announce the end of all-out appeasement.

Chamberlain, addressing a meeting of business men at Birmingham and a world-wide radio audience on the evening of March 17, gave voice to his change of heart. While he still defended his policy at Munich and said that he believed the results had 'not been altogether unsatisfactory,' he asserted that Hitler's action with respect to Czechoslovakia could not be reconciled with his promises before, during, and after the Munich settlement. How, asked the Prime Minister, could anyone believe the Fuehrer's promises in the future? He also denounced the latest German move as one which could in no way be justified, whatever justification there may have been for Hitler's Austrian and Sudetenland adventures. Speaking of a possible danger of world domination by force, Chamberlain warned that 'no greater mistake could be made than to suppose that, because it believes war to be a senseless and cruel thing, this nation has so lost its fibre that it will not take part to the utmost of its power in resisting such a challenge if it were ever made.'

Lord Halifax, speaking in the House of Lords on March 20, confirmed the alternation in foreign policy indicated by the Prime Minister at Birmingham. The Foreign Minister even implied that Britain was willing to undertake automatic obligations to resist aggression. The extent of the revolution in Britain's attitude reflected in this speech can be gauged by noting that on March 15 Sir John Simon had denied that Britain would take such a step, whereas on March 20 the House of Lords warmly applauded Halifax's statement. Current rumors also indicated that the new trend in British policy might soon be implemented, for there was talk of proposals for a British-French-Soviet-Polish bloc and other combinations against possible German moves.

In France, where the appeasement forces had seemed to triumph on every front except the Italian and where there had been fewer illusions concerning the meaning of Munich, there were mixed feelings about Hitler's march into Prague. Diplomatic and military circles were quick to point out the significance of

the Hungarian seizure of the Carpatho-Ukraine and the proof in Hitler's action of the contention that the only method of persuasion that he understood was that of force. On the other hand, there was a feeling of relief because the Prague crisis had given them another reprieve. While Bonnet, remaining discreetly in the background, seemed content to leave the initiative in dealing with the new situation to Great Britain, Premier Daladier took the opportunity afforded by the general state of uneasiness to seek an extension of his rule by decree. On March 18-19, the French Parliament granted his Government unlimited powers until November 30, thus continuing and strengthening the trend in France away from democratic government toward dictatorship. In asking for this grant, Daladier stated on March 18 that the time for talk had passed and repeated his previous assurances that he would 'not yield to force or cunning a single one of our rights or an acre of our territory.' As Chamberlain had done, he defended his action at Munich and asserted that during the present crisis France and Britain were working in close collaboration.

This close relationship was accentuated by the visit to London of President and Mme. Lebrun on March 21-24, when the French President was warmly welcomed by both the populace and the Government. At the same time the French press reported that during the visit England and France reasserted in a written agreement their February guarantees of the Netherlands and Switzerland. If true, this action represented the first response of the French Government to the urgent warnings of Ambassador Coulondre at Berlin that Hitler had to be met with force if he were to be stopped from further aggression.

A number of difficulties, however, stood in the way of Anglo-French resistance to the dictators. Not the least of these was the uncertainty as to where Germany or her partners might strike next. The eddying currents of conjecture, set in motion by both facts and rumors, whirled the weather-vane around all points of the compass. In the northeast Hitler took Memel and was reported to be demanding more territory from Lithuania. Poland was mobilizing and moving troops into the Corridor. On March 22, the Fascist Grand Council reaffirmed its 'full adhesion to the Rome-Berlin Axis.' A few days later there were rumors that the Brenner Pass had been closed to civilians in order to clear the way for German troops rolling into Italy to support an attack against France in the Mediterranean where a crisis was expected after Franco's Spanish victory. Other rumors had it

that German troops were on the march toward Holland and Belgium. Furthermore, German Ambassador Dirksen's protest against remarks of the British press and especially of Duff Cooper, which Germany regarded as insulting to the Fuehrer, increased Anglo-German tension. In the Balkans German commercial negotiations with Rumania led to rumors of German demands for complete economic subservience, and after the Italian coup in Albania, both Greece and Turkey feared that they might soon feel the weight of the next Axis thrust. In the Near East, Palestine remained a millstone around Britain's neck, for the Jewish-Arab Conference that had met in London on February 7 broke up on March 17 with both groups rejecting British proposals. In the Far East the Japanese-controlled press and her puppet Governments at Peking and Nanking were issuing threats against anyone assisting Chiang Kai-shek, and on March 31, Japan annexed the Spratley Islands, hitherto claimed by France and situated midway between Saigon and the northwest coast of Borneo within striking distance of Singapore. Indeed, there seemed to be few places where the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Bloc was not exerting pressure or where it might not strike with its usual speed and ruthlessness.

Another difficulty in the path of Anglo-French action was that of convincing their friends that the appeasement policy was a thing of the past. Certain events after March 17 increased the natural suspicion that the about-face was more a bluff than a reality. In the first place, as German propaganda quickly pointed out, Britain seemed more ready to join in some kind of multilateral agreement to consult about the situation than to incur responsibilities in any full-fledged anti-aggression alliance. Then again, on March 23, Chamberlain declared that there was 'no desire . . . to stand in the way of any reasonable efforts on the part of Germany to expand her export trade.' To many people this had the old familiar appeasement tone. Furthermore, Great Britain gave *de facto* recognition to the changes in Czechoslovakia by asking for an *exequator* for a consul-general at Prague, which, as a matter of fact, was refused by Germany. France, at the same time, seemed to be almost exclusively concerned with Italian threats and quite complacent about German policy in Eastern Europe. Nowhere did such attitudes and acts arouse greater misgivings than in Russia and Poland.

The Soviet believed that Chamberlain, whom it regarded as the *bête-noire* of Munich, was dilly-dallying over the question of an

anti-aggression front. When Litvinov, either on his own initiative or at the request of London for a suggestion, proposed a conference to be held immediately at Bucharest in order to work out a plan of resistance to the rumored German drive against Rumania, the British rejected such a procedure as 'premature.' London countered with a plan for a declaration by Britain, France, Poland, and Russia that they would consult together if Germany attacked anyone again. Russia grudgingly accepted this proposal, but considered it inadequate. The Poles regarded it as unacceptable, for it would give them no real protection and might even be a provocation to the Nazis.

Although the mounting tension between Poland and Germany tended to make this corner of Europe the center of anxiety throughout the last ten days of March, Poland still hesitated to take a definite step away from the balancing policy of the previous five years. She feared both Russia and the Reich, and most of all she feared a possible agreement between her two neighbors to partition her. In previous years, Beck had resisted German pressure for a joint attack on the U.S.S.R. even though it was supported within Poland by the Promethean movement, for Polish public opinion was on the whole opposed to it. Yet even after the German demands of September 1938 and January 1939 for Danzig and an extra-territorial road across the Corridor, Beck could not bring himself to turn for help to Russia. That he would have to find support somewhere was now evident, for the Polish people regarded the German action in Czechoslovakia to be a direct threat against themselves.

Ribbentrop, moreover, clearly indicated to Polish Ambassador Lipski on March 21 that Germany expected Poland soon to meet her demands for Danzig and a connecting link across the Corridor. If Poland complied with the wishes of the Reich, said Ribbentrop, she might join with Germany in guaranteeing the status of Slovakia, and thus put an end to fear of aggression from that direction. The German Foreign Minister warned, however, that there was no time to be lost and declared that he and Hitler would be glad to see Beck in Berlin 'in the near future,' an invitation that must have sounded ominous to the Polish Foreign Minister after the experiences of Schuschnigg, Chvalkovsky, and Hacha.

The first answer of Poland to these intimations that Germany expected her to stand and deliver was her mobilization which the German Foreign Office believed to be evidence of the growing

influence of Polish military circles backed by Britain whom it accused of already having 'a finger in the pie.' The second answer came on March 26, when Lipski presented a memorandum to Ribbentrop setting forth Poland's views. Poland was ready to join Germany in an attempt to facilitate traffic connections between East Prussia and Germany proper, but would not permit Polish sovereignty to be impinged upon. Her second suggestion was a joint guarantee of Danzig that would at the same time assure the 'free development of the German cultural and civic life' of the city and 'Polish rights and interests.' Poland further proposed that the two countries quickly enter into negotiations that would safeguard peace and effect a 'consolidation of neighborly relations between the two countries.' Ribbentrop's answer to Lipski pointed out that these proposals were inadequate for a solution of the problem, repeated his previous demands concerning Danzig and the Corridor, and added the proposal of a twenty-five-year non-aggression pact and a guarantee of Slovakia by adjoining states. The Polish Ambassador's reply was a warning that Poland would fight if Germany persisted in her demands.

Great Britain and France, informed of this deadlock between Poland and Germany and fearing some act of violence, decided to guarantee Polish independence. While Bonnet advised French Ambassador Noël in Warsaw of this decision, Chamberlain rose in the House of Commons on March 31 to explain the first public step in the new anti-aggression policy. He said that Britain could see no justification for the use of force or the threat of force to settle Germany's controversy with Poland. He stated that Britain was in the midst of consultations with other Governments, but that if, in the meantime, there occurred 'any action which clearly threatened Polish independence, and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power.' The Prime Minister then added that Poland had been given this assurance and that he spoke for France as well as Great Britain. Moreover, on April 3, Chamberlain described this pledge as 'a cover note issued in advance of the complete insurance policy' and remarked that it constituted a new epoch in British foreign policy, as indeed it did, since never before had Britain undertaken such obligations east of the Rhine.

But the effect of the Prime Minister's words of March 31 was

spoiled when on All Fool's Day the London *Times* made an important qualification of his pledge to Poland. It intimated editorially that Danzig and the Polish Corridor, since they were formerly German territories, might not be included in the guarantee. 'Independence,' said the *Times*, and not 'integrity' was the key word. 'The independence of every negotiating state is what matters. . . . Mr. Chamberlain's statement involved no blind acceptance of the *status quo*.' To offset the alarm in Poland and elsewhere caused by this statement and by other signs of British acquiescence in the view that not all of Poland's territory was included in the Chamberlain pledge, a semi-official declaration was issued in London on the afternoon of April 1 to the effect that it was up to Poland to determine when and where a threat to her independence required armed resistance. This left the impression that, although Britain thought Poland should make concessions to Germany concerning Danzig and the Corridor, she would nevertheless stand by Poland if concessions were deemed impossible.

As a result of Colonel Beck's visit to London during the first week of April, Chamberlain announced on April 6 that Britain and Poland had decided upon a permanent and reciprocal agreement to replace the temporary and unilateral promise of March 31; that they would agree to render each other assistance 'in the event of any threat, direct or indirect, to the independence of either'; but that they had no aggressive intent toward any country and would not preclude the signing of agreements with other countries in the interests of peace. Beck assured Great Britain, moreover, that until the permanent agreement was finally worked out, Poland would consider herself 'under obligation to render assistance to His Majesty's Government under the same conditions as those contained in the temporary assurance already given by His Majesty's Government to Poland.' All this, however, still constituted promises of future action rather than formal treaty commitments.

Nevertheless, the stand of Britain and France with respect to Poland had apparently upset Hitler, to judge from his speech at Wilhelmshaven on April 1. Celebrating the launching of Germany's second 35,000-ton battleship, the *Admiral von Tirpitz*, the Fuehrer delivered a bitter attack upon Great Britain, and said that he regarded the Anglo-German Naval Treaty as practically abrogated. Although he did not mention explicitly the new British pledge to Poland, he charged Britain with pursuing a

policy of encirclement. Stirred with emotions that seemed to be compounded of both anger and disappointment, he warned that Germany would accept the challenge 'at any time.' Compared with previous pronouncements at critical times Hitler's outbursts gave the impression of a man on the defensive rather than the offensive. Whether encouraged to believe that their pledge to Poland was already having the desired effect or simply determined to show that they meant business, Great Britain and France continued to build up what soon became known as the 'peace front.'

## *2. The Balkans and the Peace Front*

Both the German trade agreement with Rumania and the Italian move in Albania had brought the British and French Governments to a realization of the implications of the Axis economic and military threats to Balkan independence. The situation here, however, held special difficulties for any counter-Axis moves. Although King George II had been restored to the Greek throne in 1935 with British aid and Greece feared Italy, she was dependent upon German markets to the extent of forty per cent of her exports. Furthermore, the Premier-Dictator, German-trained General Metaxas, was suspected of favoring the Nazis. In Rumania, likewise, officialdom seemed to be split concerning the best course to pursue.

It is impossible on the basis of present sources to determine exactly what happened in Rumania. While there were press reports of Rumanian troop concentrations on her Carpatho-Ukrainian border, of Rumanian attempts to get Franco-British guarantees, and of a Polish-Rumanian agreement on April 15 to make their defensive alliance — originally directed against the Soviet and renewed on March 4 — operative in the event of a German attack, the Germans reported that Rumania did not wish to become involved in the peace front. They represented the pro-British Rumanian Minister in London as being at odds with Foreign Minister Gafencu, who denied the allegations of his subordinate that a German ultimatum lay behind the trade agreement of March 23 and who publicly asserted that Rumania, willing to make commercial agreements with anyone, would defend her interests by force of arms if need be. German documents also state that London tried to bring pressure upon Rumania through her allies, Poland and Turkey, but that Gafencu



refused to extend the Polish-Rumanian Alliance or to enter into reciprocal pacts with London and Paris, although he felt that he could not evade Anglo-French unilateral declarations. The truth of the matter seems to be that Rumania, like Poland, did not wish to enter any combination which might lay her open to the charge from Berlin of being anti-German; nor did she want to seek or accept Soviet aid which alone might be effective in case of a German attack.

In London on April 13, despite the warnings of Lloyd George that without the certainty of Soviet help Britain was walking into a trap through her policy of guarantees, Chamberlain made an announcement of pledges to Rumania and Greece whereby the British Government would give them 'all the support' it could muster if those countries saw fit to defend their independence by armed force. Premier Daladier took the same stand, on behalf of France, on the same day. For some reason, perhaps because they did not fear an immediate threat to Yugoslavia, Chamberlain and Daladier took no overt steps to guarantee that Power, but concentrated their attention next upon Turkey who was as much alarmed over possible Axis moves in the Mediterranean as was Greece.

An economic tug-of-war had been going on for some months between Germany and England over Turkey. In May 1938, London had granted Turkey a credit of sixteen million pounds while on January 15, 1939, Germany had extended her a credit of a hundred and fifty million marks. The events of March and April, however, had apparently persuaded Turkey to throw in her lot with the Anglo-French peace front. Accordingly, on May 12 the British Government was able to announce an agreement with Turkey to 'cooperate effectively' and to extend aid to each other 'in the event of an act of aggression leading to war in the Mediterranean area.' Like the Polish understanding this was a tentative arrangement whose ultimate formalization would depend to a considerable extent upon the attitude of Soviet Russia. It did indicate clearly, however, an agreement to forestall any forceful modification in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean where Britain's power could be exerted to a much greater extent than along the shores of the Baltic.

French collaboration in the Anglo-Turkish understanding took a slightly different form from that in the case of Rumania and Greece, for Turkey wanted something more from France than a reciprocal pledge of assistance. Turkey had never been

satisfied with the arrangement over the Hatay (Sanjak of Alexandretta) and took the opportunity of French need to demand its annexation to Turkey. In violation of her mandate over Syria, France on June 23 acquiesced in this disposition of the Hatay and at the same time exchanged with Turkey the same pledges as those between Britain and Turkey. The high price of Turkish aid was but one more result of French softness toward Mussolini, for, as Pertinax pointed out, had France been firm in 1935 she could have secured Turkish support for the asking. Following this agreement France, as well as Britain, sent a military mission to Ankara, while Turkey sent one to London and to Egypt.

In addition to their political negotiations with Poland, Rumania, Greece, and Turkey, London and Paris tried to prevent these nations from falling completely under German economic domination by offering financial and commercial assistance. Britain granted credits to Rumania and Greece as well as to Turkey, and France concluded commercial treaties with Rumania and Poland while those two countries sent economic missions to London. Moreover, for their own security as well as for the moral effect upon the little nations in Europe who were risking the future vengeance of the Third Reich by adhering to the peace front, both Britain and France attempted to hasten their own preparations for war.

On March 29, Chamberlain declared that the Territorial Field Army would be placed immediately upon a war footing and would be doubled in strength, thus bringing it up to 340,000 men. On April 20, he promised that a Ministry of Supply would be shortly established. When the budget was laid before Parliament on April 25, nearly half its total expenditure of about \$6,200,000,000 was to be applied to defense. British air officials were at the same time engaged in planning closer cooperation with the French. Meanwhile, Daladier had authorized a military expenditure of 12,770,000,000 francs (about \$320,000,000). War preparations had heightened industrial productivity in France from an average index figure for 1938 of 82 to one of 93 for March and April 1939, although there were still dark spots in the French economic situation as well as fears that Daladier's policy was quite as much a preparation for Fascism in France as for war.

### 3. *The Axis Versus the Peace Front*

Although Italy made less fuss about these developments than did Germany whose diplomatic officials kept up the cry of encirclement, the Axis Powers did not relish either the creation of the peace front or the military and economic preparations of England and France. The immediate provocation for a counter-move came, however, from across the Atlantic when President Roosevelt made a spectacular though ineffective effort to strengthen the anti-aggression front and to avert the war that seemed certain to break out if both sides in Europe stood firm.

After Munich the President and his advisers, convinced of the danger to America inherent in the domination of Europe by the Rome-Berlin Axis and aware of the critical situation in the Far East which even more directly threatened American interests, faced the problem of encouraging a stand against the dictators without offending the isolationist sentiment of the American public. In December 1938, Cordell Hull went to the Pan-American Conference at Lima in order to check Fascist encroachments in South America and to seek the establishment of a 'hemispheric foreign policy.' In January 1939, the President called for the repeal of the arms embargo and told American Ambassadors in Europe that while the United States could not make political commitments it would support economic readjustments. Both he and Secretary of the Interior Ickes had condemned the November pogroms in Germany. Early in February it became known that the President had released some American bombers and pursuit planes to France, and it was rumored that he had told a Senatorial committee that the Rhine was the American frontier. Although this rumor was denied, after a delay that suggested it had been deliberately put about in order to impress Germany and to stiffen the resistance of Chamberlain and Bonnet, there is no doubt that the President believed and may have said that the sale of airplanes to France was justified because the French army was the first line of American defense. The further rumor that Chamberlain and Daladier had promised President Roosevelt to stop the dictators if he would support them was probably without any foundation whatever.

Nevertheless, like many other Americans who had become fearful that totalitarian aggression would bring war or a gradual establishment of Axis predominance that, in turn, would constitute a threat to the Western Hemisphere, the President was sym-

pathetic with the development of a peace front and wanted to do all he could to encourage it. Accordingly, he staged his own 'Saturday Surprise' when he revealed on April 15 a personal message to Hitler and Mussolini. In it he asked the direct question: 'Are you willing to give assurances that your armed forces will not attack or invade the territory or possessions of the following independent nations: . . .' He then listed thirty-one countries including Britain, France, Rumania, Poland, Russia, and the Scandinavian, Baltic, and Low Countries. The President suggested that such assurances should be given for a minimum number of ten years and promised that if he received the pledges of Hitler and Mussolini he would immediately transmit them to the countries concerned. He would simultaneously attempt to obtain from the latter reciprocal assurances which he was reasonably certain they would be willing to give. The President finally declared that then the United States would be prepared to share in two kinds of international discussion, one on armament reduction, the other on the opening up of avenues of international trade to every nation on equal terms both for purchases and sales and also for 'obtaining the materials and products of peaceful economic life.'

The immediate, though unofficial, reaction in Rome and Berlin was one of resentment and outrage. In Italy, where Goering was carrying on conversations with Mussolini, the message was called 'the most incredible document in the whole history of diplomacy.' German comment suggested that the President had sent his cable to the wrong address and that, as Hitler's own *Voelkischer Beobachter* stated, it was 'scallawagery' with a 'Jewish taint.' The message, however, caused a break in European tension while the totalitarian states tried to decide what official answer to make. They could not very well accept the President's proposals unconditionally, for that would mean an end of sword-rattling, since he had made it clear that at the proposed conferences both sides would have to 'leave their arms outside.' Yet a flat rejection would give England and France the best possible excuse for pressing forward the consummation of their peace front.

Germany soon announced that Hitler would make an official reply to Roosevelt in a speech to the Reichstag on April 28. Mussolini's only official notice of the President's appeal was contained in a speech of April 20 at Rome. The Duce protested that he was a man of peace and asked how else could one explain the

fact that he was working on plans for a world's fair in 1942. Could he at the same time be planning to attack anyone? 'It is therefore absolutely unjust, and unjustifiable,' he declared, 'to attempt to place the nations of the Axis on the seat of the accused.' He expressed his conviction, however, that requests for ten-year guarantees were absurd, for they did not take into consideration 'the pyramidal errors of geography into which individuals have fallen who have not even the most rudimentary knowledge of European affairs.'

In the period between the receipt of Roosevelt's message and his own reply, Hitler asked a number of the smaller countries mentioned by the President whether or not they feared German aggression. Some, like the Netherlands, asserted that they had no fears, but, in case of a European war, were prepared to meet all eventualities. Switzerland declared that she was ready to defend her neutrality which had been expressly recognized by Germany as well as other neighboring nations. Belgium stated that she too trusted the good faith of the countries which had guaranteed her independence. Similar answers were made public by other small countries, while Rumania was apparently the only one who had the courage to declare that she could not see how anybody could feel secure in Europe at the time. Hitler, therefore, was supplied with excellent material upon which to base his reply to Roosevelt.

It was in an ironic mood that the Fuehrer addressed the Reichstag on April 28 in what was probably the cleverest public speech of his career. In contrast to his Wilhelmshaven address, he seemed unusually jovial and confident, played the part of the comic as well as the deeply serious leader of the Reich, and punctuated his remarks frequently with sarcastic intonations and gestures. After opening his eighteen-thousand-word oration with a sarcastic reference to the hopes roused in democratic countries by the Roosevelt message, he turned for an hour and a half to the usual complaints about Versailles, Bolshevism, the menace to Germany of even the truncated Czechoslovak state and the profits from the acquisition of Bohemia and Moravia. He also included a discussion of Germany's relations with England and Poland. He protested that despite his own peaceful desires the British were assuming a warlike attitude toward the Reich. His only demand upon England was for colonies, but he saw no reason why this should ever become a cause for military conflict. Yet the highly antagonistic attitude of England had caused him

that very day to send notice of the abrogation of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement, although he was still ready to enter negotiations on the whole problem any time England wished to do so. Turning to the subject of Poland, Hitler divulged 'a concrete offer to the Polish Government' — that made on March 21 and 26 — and stated that since Poland had rejected it, had offered unsatisfactory counter-proposals, and had made an agreement with Britain contrary to the provisions of the German-Polish Treaty of Non-Aggression, he was forced also to denounce the Pact of 1934.

Having thus cleared away two of the most significant pillars of the former appeasement era, Hitler turned to a twenty-one-point answer to President Roosevelt. Therein he asserted that the President's request for a frank statement of his peaceful intentions was unnecessary because he had made them known 'in innumerable public speeches.' In any event, the Fuehrer asserted that he would give such an explanation only to his people for whose 'existence and life' he was responsible and who alone had 'the right to demand' an accounting from him. In answer to the suggestion of a conference, he asserted that the League of Nations had been the greatest conference body in the world, that Germany had joined it, but had left it because of her bitter experience with its procedure. Therefore, in the future Germany would follow the example of the United States and avoid the League conference system. Germany, he continued, had gone unarmed to the peace conference after the World War with such bitter results that she would never again enter a conference 'defenseless.' Hitler then congratulated the President upon being the leader of such a rich country that he had plenty of time to assume responsibility for the peace of the world, but pointed out that since he, himself, was head of a poor and crowded Germany, he had to tend strictly to his own business. He called upon Roosevelt to make good Wilson's promises and restore to Germany her former colonies. With respect to the thirty-one countries, and in spite of Roosevelt's presumption and errors in listing states which Germany could not attack because of military difficulties and in naming others, like Syria, which had been deprived of independence by aggressive democracies, he pledged that the German Government was prepared 'to give each of the states named an assurance of the kind desired by Mr. Roosevelt, on condition of absolute reciprocity,' provided that the state wanted it and itself addressed a request for such an assurance together with 'correspondingly acceptable proposals.'

The Fuehrer also included in his speech an assurance that Germany had no intention of attacking or invading 'American territory.' If read in conjunction with another portion of the oration in which he declared that he did not believe 'that every conflict need have disastrous consequences for the whole world . . . provided that it is not systematically drawn into such conflict by the obligations of a network of nebulous pacts,' the inference was plain that he thought the United States as well as other countries should permit him to wage local wars. It was the same argument which Nazi Germany had advanced whenever an attempt had been made to build up collective security and was, no doubt, intended to appeal forcibly to American isolationism.

Hitler's speech was accompanied by German notes to London and Warsaw formally denouncing the agreements to which he had referred. At the same time, Germany entered into negotiations for non-aggression pacts with Estonia, Latvia, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland. The last three assured Germany that no such pacts were necessary, but Denmark signed one on May 31, and Latvia and Estonia completed treaties on June 7. There was nothing that Roosevelt could do about the answers of either Mussolini or Hitler, except to indicate to the Italian and German representatives in Washington that their Governments had shown poor manners in failing to give a written answer to a written communication. The whole exchange had proved to be little more than a springboard for Hitler's next move.

While assiduously instilling a sense of security into all the surrounding states except Poland, the Fuehrer next turned his attention to his Axis partner to whom he had referred in his April 28 speech as bound to Germany by unseverable ties. As usual, however, this would seem to have been a slight overstatement. A conference between Ciano and the Yugoslavian Foreign Minister, Cincar-Markovitch, at Venice on April 22 revived former rumors that Italy was seeking to line up Yugoslavia, Hungary, and its own Kingdom of Albania in a front against Hitler's drive southeastward. Also, it was observed in Berlin that Italy had failed to make much of Hitler's birthday on April 20 and that Mussolini had not been very belligerent in his reply to Roosevelt. While the expression of public opinion in Italy was, like so many other things, a Government monopoly, there could be no doubt that the Italian people had no more fellow feeling for Nazi Germany than had most of her other neighbors.

Since Mussolini, however, had reached a point where, in view

of the French and British attitude toward his demands, it was for him a question of an alliance with Germany or humiliation, there was nothing to do but dance to Hitler's tune. Accordingly, Ciano and Ribbentrop at Milan on May 6-7 agreed upon a military pact which was later signed at Berlin when Ciano visited the German capital on May 22. The published part of the treaty provided for full consultation and collaboration between the two countries in order to maintain the security and vital interests of each party. According to Article 3: 'If, contrary to the wishes and hopes of the contracting parties it should happen that one of them is involved in hostilities with another Power or Powers, the other contracting party will come immediately to its side as ally and support it with all its military forces on land, sea, and in the air.' Other articles provided for close and continuing economic and military cooperation. In commenting upon the treaty whose first announcement had been hailed in both Germany and Italy as a 'steel block,' an answer to encirclement, Virginio Gayda declared that there were secret conventions and that it was known in both Rome and Berlin 'that neither Italy nor Germany' intended 'to launch into follies and unconsidered adventures.' He went on to explain: 'An extreme case requiring reciprocal aid and common risk would arise only out of an extreme cause in which their most legitimate and vital interests were at stake.'

This German-Italian agreement was supplemented by the co-ordination of their air forces and military police and by plans for economic as well as military cooperation which appeared to constitute preparations for war. Furthermore, Hitler gave up his designs on the South Tyrol, for in July, Italy and Germany agreed to the transfer to the Reich of the German minority in that area. Nevertheless, it was not at all certain that Italy would recognize Danzig and the Corridor as 'extreme causes' calling for her military support of Germany. Gayda's reservations, Italian maneuvers in the Balkans, and the presence of high German officials in Italy before the pact was signed all suggested that Italy had been subjected to considerable pressure before signing and would hesitate before rushing into a war against Poland with whom her relations had remained friendly.

Perhaps one reason why the Fuehrer professed not to be impressed by the peace front was the fact that Britain and France continued to dilute their wine of resistance with the water of appeasement. The *London Times* on April 5 had laid great emphasis upon the necessity for ordered diplomacy as opposed to the



browbeating tactics used against Schuschnigg and Beneš, but had also declared that Britain did not want to defend the *status quo* and did not want to encircle Germany. Continuing, the *Times* had explained that what Chamberlain wanted was a return to reason and not action that would lead to war. Furthermore, Lord Halifax on April 19 had said to the House of Lords: 'What we all desire is to see established a comprehensive system against aggression, but with facilities for peaceful change excluding no one who wishes to come in.' Thus, Hitler may well have concluded that this virtual offer to deal with him if he would behave like a gentleman betrayed a frame of mind that would scarcely succeed in building up a powerful resistance should he continue his former tactics.

The return to Germany on April 23 of Ambassador Nevile Henderson, who had been recalled to London on March 17, seemed to offer further evidence that Britain was merely trying to bluff Germany. Chamberlain's explanation for the Ambassador's return did not remove the suspicion that the men of Munich were following the same old course. He said that Henderson's return to Berlin did not imply recognition of Germany's or Italy's acts, but added that, after all, an end had to be made to an abnormal state of affairs and that the Ambassador was returning 'in the normal course of things.' The Prime Minister's critics recalled that appeasement had for a long time been the 'normal course.' When Henderson, himself, told the German State Secretary at the Wilhelmstrasse that Britain would fight if necessary, but would do everything she could to avoid war, the Germans, too, must have noted little distinction between this declaration and the admission back in June 1937 that Britain wanted peace at 'almost any price.'

In May, the cries of the isolationist press, the continuance in office of such men as Simon and Hoare in England and Bonnet in France, the British remittance to German-held Prague of Czechoslovak assets deposited in London by the Bank of International Settlements, and the similarities between the Polish and the pre-Munich Czech situation not only fortified the belief in the continuance of appeasement, but also led many to the conclusion that England and France would not fight for Danzig. On the other hand, both Western Powers showed in many ways that they meant business. For one thing Great Britain adopted conscription and thus answered in part the contention of Nazi propagandists that 'Britain would fight to the last Frenchman.'

France, meanwhile, markedly increased her airplane production and with it her morale. Fundamentally, the situation amounted to this: The Western Powers could not any longer permit a repetition of *Anschluss*, Munich, and Prague, but they still hoped that their show of resistance and the fact that Hitler had united almost all the Germans would lead to an era of negotiation in which further changes might be adjusted amicably and gradually in such a way as to restore an atmosphere of peace and a condition of stability. While they were trying to pull the mailed glove on one hand they timidly held out the other to the dictators, an awkward gesture that made both motions appear ridiculous. Meanwhile, the Poles who were next in line for attack were made nervous by these appeasement posturings, and the Russians were confirmed in their mistrust.

#### 4. *Wooing the U.S.S.R.*

Between Munich and Prague the position of Soviet Russia had been an unenviable one of isolation and uncertainty. She had felt herself deserted by France and spurned by Great Britain while still the object of venomous attacks by Germany, Italy, and Japan, although the last had seemed more interested in this period in striking at Britain and France than at the U.S.S.R. Moreover, the failure of the collective security system for which Litvinov had worked so hard had caused Russia to seek some other means of protecting herself from attack. There were, to be sure, some signs in the winter of 1938-39 that Russia might, by playing one side against the other, strike a balancing position that would stave off disaster for a time. Although Hitler and Ribbentrop continued to denounce Bolshevism, rumors of a German-Russian rapprochement began to circulate in November and December 1938 and seemed in part to be confirmed by the German trade mission to Moscow in February 1939. On the other hand, Poland showed signs of a desire for friendlier relations with her eastern neighbor, while London on February 20 announced that Robert Hudson, Secretary of the Department of Overseas Trade, would visit Moscow as well as Berlin on his economic mission. Moreover, Chamberlain on March 1 went to the Soviet Embassy for the first visit of a British Prime Minister since the days of Ramsay MacDonald. But since these and other evidences of a changed attitude toward Russia were offset by continued Nazi and Tory hostility, the Soviet Union failed to be greatly impressed.

On March 10, Stalin struck the keynote of Soviet policy in a speech before the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party that received far too little attention outside the Union. He bitterly attacked the policy of 'non-intervention,' assailed the Western Powers for seeking to embroil the U.S.S.R. and Germany in war, mocked them for being disappointed because Germany, instead of attacking Russia, was now demanding colonies, and stated in words that later became the watchwords of Communist propagandists that the 'second imperialist war' was being prepared. Against this background, he asserted that the Soviet Union would pursue a cautious policy and would not allow itself to be drawn into conflicts to pull chestnuts out of the fire for other countries. He laid down as the lines which Russia would follow the maintenance of peace and the strengthening of business relations with all countries, the pursuit of peaceful and friendly relations with all neighboring countries, support for victims of aggression who were 'fighting for the independence of their country,' and readiness to resist any country attempting to violate the Russian borders. While his adherence to the policy of helping victims of aggression suggested that Russia was still opposed to the totalitarian states, Stalin probably intended to throw a hint to the Western Powers when he warned that 'the big and dangerous political game started by the supporters of the policy of non-intervention may end in a serious fiasco for them.'

Although this speech was fundamentally a reiteration of the stand taken in 1933-34, when the policy of collaboration in a collective security system had been begun, it also plainly indicated Stalin's disgust with the Powers with whom Russia had attempted to work. It should have been a warning to the leaders of the Western democracies, but it went almost unnoticed. Perhaps the British and French Governments were so certain of Soviet support that they failed to make the necessary efforts to win the Union to their side. There was some justification for this view, since Russia's vigorous condemnation of the German march into Prague and of the Italian seizure of Albania suggested that Stalin would align the Soviet with the peace front.

The first attempt to build an all-inclusive anti-aggression front had quickly bogged down in March when Britain objected to a Russian proposal for a conference and Poland refused to consider two British counter-proposals. Apparently no further proposals were made until April 13, when, just after hotly phrased Russian press denunciations of the Albanian coup, Chamberlain

and Daladier sent new overtures to Moscow. It would appear that they suggested a Russian unilateral guarantee of Poland and Rumania to go into effect at the will of the two countries concerned and after Britain and France had sent aid. The obvious intent here was to safeguard Poland and Rumania from unwelcome assistance, since they both feared a Soviet invasion in the guise of help, and to assure the U.S.S.R. that it would not be left alone by Britain and France to handle the chestnuts in the fire. Russia rejected this proposal, however, for the two reasons that under such an arrangement Russia was to give aid to Anglo-French allies, but was not to receive help herself if attacked by Germany or Japan and that the three Baltic states of Latvia, Estonia, and Finland were not included in the guarantees. These countries had always been regarded by Soviet Russia as possible bases for an attack upon the Union.

The impasse thus reached in April was never solved, although negotiations continued to drag on throughout the summer. Early in May, however, evidence began to crop up that both the U.S.S.R. and Germany were changing their attitudes toward one another. It was noted that in Hitler's April 28 speech the usual invective against the Soviet Union was missing. On May 3, Litvinov, the symbol of the Soviet's fight for collective security, was replaced as Commissar of Foreign Affairs by Premier Viacheslav Molotov, a loyal Stalin man who was neither a Jew nor associated prominently with the former collective security policy. About the same time the French Ambassador in Berlin was told by a person close to Hitler that 'something was going on in the East' and that ideological considerations would not prevent an agreement with Russia. By May 9 Berlin was filled with rumors about German proposals for a partition of Poland. French Ambassador Coulondre urged the necessity of haste in the Anglo-French negotiations with the Soviet if a German-Russian rapprochement were to be checked.

Toward the end of May, Great Britain submitted revised proposals to the Soviet. This time they provided for a draft treaty of mutual assistance between Britain, France, and Russia including arrangements for military consultations. Yet the proposed triple entente did not, as Molotov pointed out in a speech to the Supreme Soviet on May 31, guarantee the Baltic states against either direct or 'indirect' aggression, although it represented a 'step forward.' Molotov also complained that even the agreement of mutual assistance was hedged about with reservations.

He then stated that Russia had to have the following as minimum conditions for an agreement: An effective pact of mutual assistance against aggression, a guarantee against aggression to be given to the states of Central and Eastern Europe 'including all European countries bordering on the U.S.S.R., without exception,' and a concrete military agreement to be concluded by the U.S.S.R., Great Britain, and France. The fundamental consideration stressed by Molotov was that the U.S.S.R. should be treated on the basis of absolute equality and complete reciprocity.

A new turn was given to negotiations when Chamberlain decided to send William Strang, an expert on East European affairs in the Foreign Office, to Moscow with the British answer to Molotov's conditions. This was deemed to be an unfortunate choice, not only because Strang was an underling to Chamberlain and Halifax, who themselves had personally undertaken missions of similar importance in the past, but also because Strang's former activities when Counselor of the British Embassy at Moscow and his participation in the Munich parley did not endear him to the Soviet. Although much emphasis was placed upon this question of personalities and prestige at the time, it is unlikely that they really affected the outcome of negotiations, for at bottom Stalin and Molotov were determined to avoid war if they could possibly do so and were so suspicious of Chamberlain, Halifax, Daladier, and Bonnet that it is probable nothing in the summer of 1939 would have availed to bring them into a triplce with France and Britain. Furthermore, to judge from later events, in the absence of documentation, it is more than likely that behind all the talk on the part of the Soviet of direct and 'indirect' aggression in the Baltic lay a demand or a proposal for Russian occupation of strategic points in the Baltic states as a precautionary measure against German aggression. This was something that France and Great Britain could not agree upon because the states concerned opposed it for fear that it would mean eventual Soviet domination. Thus, while alleging that Britain and France were sending minor officials to Moscow, that they were still at heart appeasers who would readily throw the Soviet to the Nazi wolves, and were unwilling to give Russia the guarantees that they demanded of her, Stalin and Molotov were preparing to pick up Chamberlain's umbrella and secure for themselves 'peace for our time' from Hitler.

Throughout the latter part of June and all of July the negotia-

tions seemed to be concerned primarily with the question of guarantees to the Baltic states and a definition of what would constitute 'indirect aggression.' Despite the failure to settle this problem, Chamberlain announced on July 31 that British and French military missions would go to Moscow at once to begin staff talks. They arrived in Moscow on August 10, and in the meantime, with Strang's return to London, political discussions were declared to be at an end. By this time, however, German-Soviet negotiations were well advanced and Russian suspicions of Britain and France further increased by new signs of appeasement both in Europe and the Far East.

Although Japan had failed in May to agree upon a military convention that Germany desired in order to strengthen the ties with Tokyo at the same time as those with Rome, she increased her pressure upon the Western Powers, especially upon Great Britain. As a result of a controversy arising over the assassination of a customs official, Japan on June 14 blockaded the British and French concessions at Tientsin, mistreated British nationals, and interfered with British shipping. Caught between the cross-fire of Germany in Europe and Japan in the Far East, and apparently unable to obtain guarantees of sufficient naval support from the United States, Chamberlain told the House of Commons on July 24 that Britain recognized Japan's 'special requirements' in waging the war in China, and would make it plain to British authorities and nationals that they should desist from actions interfering with Japan's needs. This was in marked contrast to the attitude taken by the United States on July 26 when Secretary Hull denounced the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation of 1911 with Japan in reprisal for Japanese interference with American interests in China. Despite Chamberlain's denial of July 31 that Great Britain was surrendering all her rights to Japan, the faltering attitude of his Government, probably adopted out of a feeling that England could not resist on all fronts at once, gave his critics grounds for the fear that his capitulation was but part of a revamped appeasement policy.

Two developments with respect to Europe seemed to confirm such a conclusion. On June 29, at a dinner given by the Royal Institute of International Affairs Lord Halifax asserted: 'British policy rests on twin foundations of purpose. One is determination to resist force. The other is our recognition of the world's desire to get on with the constructive work of building peace. If we could once be satisfied that the intentions of others were the same

as our own, and that we all really wanted peaceful solutions — then, I say here definitely, we could discuss the problems that are today causing the world anxiety . . . the colonial problem, the questions of raw materials, trade barriers, the issue of *Lebensraum*, the limitation of armaments, and any other issue that affects the lives of all European citizens.’ As Ambassador Henderson later pointed out, no fairer offer could have been made to Hitler. It was, indeed, the last complete statement before the war of the conditions upon which Britain was ready to deal with Germany. The conditions were still essentially the same as those upon which Chamberlain had launched his whole appeasement effort — peaceful negotiation without the threat or use of force. At the moment, however, when to the resisters the supreme task was to get Russia into the peace front and the supreme folly was to believe that Hitler could be trusted or dealt with on any conditions but his own, the Halifax speech struck an ominous note.

Similarly, reports in mid-July of the Hudson conversations with Dr. Helmuth Wohltat of the German Ministry of Economics shook the confidence of the anti-appeasers both within and without England. The rumor spread that London was negotiating a ‘peace loan’ to Berlin of one billion pounds that had been proposed by Robert Hudson. The latter, but recently returned from his round of visits to several European countries, explained that the loan had been discussed as a means of enabling Germany to transform her economy from a war to a peace basis, but was to be granted only if Germany agreed to disarm and to withdraw from Czechoslovakia. Moreover, Chamberlain on July 24 declared that as Hudson had been carrying on purely personal discussions the Government was in no way concerned. The Hudson-Wohltat affair, however, was more significant as a gauge of English public opinion and of the world’s mistrust and suspicion of the British Government than as a move in the direction of saving Europe from war. In this connection it was clear that by the middle of July not only had the majority in England come to feel that there could no longer be the slightest relapse into appeasement, but public opinion in the Dominions as well had clearly swung into line behind the policy of resistance.

The wooing of Russia came to an abrupt end on August 23 when, instead of the consummation of an anti-aggression alliance, word came from Moscow of a Russian non-aggression pact with Germany. The world was little prepared for this shock in spite of Litvinov’s resignation, Molotov’s warnings, and the sign-

ing of a German-Soviet commercial treaty on August 20. It represented the most sudden and complete revolution in European diplomacy of two decades and took the Communist Party members and fellow travelers in all countries quite as much by surprise as it did everyone else. At first it was assumed that the U.S.S.R. had safeguarded itself by an 'escape clause' as in other similar treaties which would make this pact invalid if either party committed an act of aggression against a third party, but even this was lacking from the text of the treaty. Germany and Russia thereby agreed that for ten years they would neither alone nor in combination with any other Powers commit an act of aggression against each other. Furthermore, they would consult regarding mutual problems, and would adjust any conflicts by peaceful means. Probably Ribbentrop, who went to Moscow to sign the pact, also discussed with Molotov in general terms a partition of Poland if Germany should go to war with her.

Soviet Commissar of War Voroshilov in an interview published by *Izvestia* explained that the pact with Germany had been signed because 'among other reasons' the military talks with France and Britain 'had reached a deadlock in view of insuperable differences,' and because Poland had declared that it did not need and would not accept Soviet military assistance. Molotov, following the same line in his speech of August 31 before the Supreme Council, insisted that far from trying to overcome Polish objections Great Britain on the contrary had 'encouraged' them. These, however, were thin excuses even admitting that the Poles may have sought to prevent the consummation of a military alliance with Russia. There were other alternatives for the U.S.S.R. besides a pact with Germany. For example, an attitude of strict neutrality would at least have had the advantage for Poland, France, and Britain of keeping Hitler guessing and would probably have been just as effective in preventing a German attack upon the U.S.S.R. The fact was that Stalin, out of fear of attack, mistrust of the Western Powers, and desire to shove his defenses farther to the west was willing to become a partner of Hitler in his aggression upon Poland. In addition, he brought the Communist movement to its final stage of bankruptcy by appropriating Chamberlain's appeasement umbrella and by waving it more unctuously over the heads of his own and Hitler's victims than ever Chamberlain had done.

Hitler's reasons for the pact were clear. First of all, he undoubtedly hoped that it would cause Britain and France to with-



draw their support of Poland in view of the fact that without Russian help they could not hope to save her nor to wage war with Germany on favorable terms. In the second place, if war did come, the German General Staff wanted both to avoid a two-front campaign and to revert to a scheme first worked out by General von Seeckt in 1920-22 by which Germany and Russia would divide Poland and then be in a position to attack the West. Some of Hitler's advisers, especially Ribbentrop and Goebbels, were said to have been advocating an agreement with the Soviet for at least two years. Nazi ethics would not stand in the way of an eventual attack upon the U.S.S.R. when the victory in the West was assured. Hitler's deal with Stalin was thus a logical application of his long-pursued strategy of neutralizing his most dangerous opponents while committing an act of aggression.

### *5. The Outbreak of War*

If Hitler did count upon a speedy collapse of the Anglo-French peace front, he reckoned without the stubbornness of the British and their Prime Minister who were now thoroughly determined to stick by their guns. On August 25, Britain signed with Poland a mutual-assistance agreement in its final form to supplant the temporary declarations of the spring and to complement the Polish-French Alliance. It provided for support and assistance not only in case of direct attack, but also in the event of an attempt to 'undermine the independence of one of the Contracting Parties by processes of economic penetration or in any other way.'

Polish-German relations had boiled throughout the summer over the Danzig and Corridor questions. On May 5, Foreign Minister Beck gave Poland's official answer to Hitler's demands and his renunciation of the non-aggression pact. In a speech to the Polish Parliament and in a memorandum to the Reich, Beck firmly but politely asserted that Danzig was essential to the economy of his country and emphasized the autonomy which Germans enjoyed there. He declared that the mutual-assistance agreement with Britain was not, as Hitler had argued, inconsistent with the German-Polish Treaty. He thought that Poland had gone as far as she could in granting concessions to Germany in the Corridor. He repeated his willingness to negotiate, but only under conditions of 'peaceful intentions' and 'peaceful methods of procedure.' Beck concluded by stating that while

peace was 'a desirable and valuable thing,' Poland did not 'recognize the conception of "peace at any price."'

Officially the Reich received Beck's words in silence, although the press termed them 'an insult.' There then began the familiar pattern of Nazi pressure and Nazi press attacks in order to undermine the position of the intended victim. A dispute was raised over the number and activities of Polish customs inspectors in Danzig which the Poles feared might be used to bring about an economic union of the Free City with the Reich. In June, rumors spread that on the fifteenth the Nazis in Danzig under the leadership of Albert Forster would persuade the Danzig Parliament to proclaim Danzig's incorporation into the Reich. Then, according to reports, if Poland took military measures Germany would claim to have been attacked and would launch counter-attacks with the hope that England and France would not in the circumstances consider that their guarantees had to be honored. Whether the rumors in June were unfounded or the intervention of the League High Commissioner for Danzig, Carl Burckhardt, was responsible, June 15 passed without any attempt at *Anschluss*, although Danzig was already filling up with semi-military Nazi formations. Moreover, Bonnet in an exchange with Ribbentrop at the end of June and Chamberlain in a public speech on July 10 flatly stated that France and Britain would honor their pledges to Poland, thus warning Germany plainly that they would not countenance the chicanery of 'counter-attacks.'

While incidents continued to occur as Poland and Danzig kept up an exchange of notes, a temporary cooling down of passions on both sides took place in July. Nazi Gauleiter Forster returned to Danzig from an interview with Hitler to inform the High Commissioner that the Fuehrer was in no hurry to settle the Danzig question, and had no desire to precipitate a general conflict. The Polish representative in Danzig, although pleased at this news, voiced the suspicion that the Nazis were merely laying a trap in order to catch Poland napping. Thus the air remained thick with mistrust that was fed by false rumors concerning the intentions of both sides.

In August, however, the customs dispute flared up again. Since the Danzig Senate had continued to interfere with the activities of the Polish customs officials, Poland retaliated by imposing tariff duties upon certain imports from Danzig. An incident then occurred as a result of which Poland sent an ultima-

tum to the Danzig Senate which was represented by the Reich as evidence that Poland intended to seize the city. Forster after a summons to Germany returned with word that Hitler had reached the limit of his patience, though it is more likely that he had come to feel certain of Soviet Russia. Then followed a warning from Germany to Poland on August 9 to the effect that any future ultimatums to Danzig officials would seriously aggravate German-Polish relations. To this Poland replied that she would take any action necessary to protect her rights and would 'consider any future intervention by [the] German Government to [the] detriment of these rights and interests as an act of aggression.'

This was tall talk from a Government which had already been told and had admitted that Great Britain could not give it any direct assistance and, furthermore, had apparently refused Soviet aid in the face of a possible enemy which was far superior in military power. In response to French and British counsels of moderation, the Poles declared that they were not oppressing the German minority, as the Germans alleged, and would make every effort to settle the local issues in Danzig. There is no doubt, however, that memory of Nazi fifth-column tactics in Austria and the Sudetenland led the Poles to take precautionary measures that were not always gentle against Germans and German organizations within Poland. Toward the end of August when the Nazis were prepared to press home their charges against Poland, they retaliated by opening the floodgates of invective and recrimination against the Poles, making the most of every incident of 'butchery,' of frontier violations, and of what they considered to be Polish truculence with respect to Danzig and the Corridor.

The feeling of tension which had been developing between Poland and Germany throughout August as each side called up reserves and moved its forces toward the frontier began to spread throughout Europe after August 21 when Berlin announced that the treaty with Russia was about to be signed. On the next day, Chamberlain sent a personal letter to Hitler warning him that Britain would fight if necessary, but saw no reason why the German-Polish dispute could not be settled if a truce in press attacks and polemics were adopted. Hitler betrayed a good deal of bitterness toward England when Ambassador Henderson delivered the Prime Minister's message and declared himself ready to take the risk of England's coming to Poland's aid in

case Germany found it necessary to intervene in that country. On August 23, the Danzig Senate made the Nazi Gauleiter, Forster, head of the state. Poland protested this action on the ground that the Danzig Constitution made no provision for such a position. On the whole, however, Poland acted moderately with respect to this and other evidences of preparation for the union of Danzig with the Reich, in order to avoid creating a situation in which the Poles might be accused of aggression. On August 24, Chamberlain announced the calling up of reserves and the preparation of the fleet for blockade action and presented an Emergency Powers Bill that was quickly passed. France was also completing her defense measures.

Although Germany, too, was making her last preparations, Hitler still hesitated about taking the final plunge. He apparently hoped that he might yet annex Danzig and get his demands concerning the Corridor by means of a second Munich. On August 25 he summoned both the British and the French Ambassadors to give them personal messages for their respective Premiers in which he virtually asked them to refrain from supporting Poland in return for his own promise to respect their territories and keep the peace with them. The maneuver failed to shake Daladier from his determination to stand by Poland, even though German propaganda within France was attempting to persuade Frenchmen that they could not save Poland and that Danzig — like Czechoslovakia the year before — was not worth the blood of Frenchmen. Great Britain, after consulting France and Poland, replied on August 28 that a preliminary condition for any Anglo-German understanding was a reasonable settlement of the Polish question that would safeguard Poland's 'essential interests' and provide an international guarantee, and further suggested that direct discussions for which Poland was prepared should take place between Berlin and Warsaw.

Either because Hitler thought that Chamberlain might yet be bamboozled into thinking that his mailed fist was a gloved hand, or because he hoped to make it appear that to the last Germany was reasonable and conciliatory, he demanded early on the evening of August 29 that a Polish representative 'with full powers' be sent to Berlin on the next day. This, both Hitler and Ribbentrop insisted, in a 'stormy' interview with Henderson, was not an ultimatum. The British replied that they could not produce a Polish representative on such short notice, while

Halifax dubbed the proposed procedure 'wholly unreasonable.' When Henderson presented a counter-proposal on the night of August 30, Ribbentrop, in an obvious attempt to keep up the appearance of German fairness and moderation, read him a lengthy document in German at top speed which contained a list of reasonable German proposals for the settlement of all differences with Poland. There was a joker in this document, however, for when Henderson requested a copy, Ribbentrop replied that it was now out of date since no Polish representative had arrived by midnight. Thereupon Henderson suggested that Ribbentrop ask the Polish Ambassador to call for the proposals, but the Foreign Minister refused, declaring that he would never invite the Ambassador to visit him.

Meanwhile, the Polish Government had ordered 'defensive military measures' to take effect on August 31. Nevertheless, Foreign Minister Beck assured Britain and France that he was ready to negotiate, but not under humiliating conditions such as those imposed upon Hacha in March. On August 31, he instructed Ambassador Lipski to inform Ribbentrop that Poland was examining 'in a favorable' spirit the British proposals of August 28 for negotiation with Germany. Not until early evening, however, was Lipski able to see Ribbentrop who asked if he had full powers to negotiate. He had not. Therefore, Ribbentrop did not give him the German demands read to Henderson nor did Lipski, who had learned of them from Henderson, ask for them. Although they had thus not been formally presented either to Poland or to her allies, the German radio at 9 P.M. broadcast them together with a communiqué stating that Germany regarded them as having been rejected. When Lipski tried to get in touch with Warsaw after his interview with Ribbentrop, he found that the wires had been cut. At 5.45 the next morning, September 1, without a declaration of war Hitler's land and air forces struck at Poland in what was described by Hitler to the army and the Reichstag as a defensive measure and always referred to in Germany as a 'counter-attack.' On the same day Danzig was declared to be part of the Reich.

For a week appeals for peace had been pouring into Berlin, Warsaw, Rome, Paris, and London from all quarters: King Leopold of the Belgians, for all the Oslo states, President Roosevelt, the Canadian Prime Minister, and finally Mussolini on August 31. The position of Italy was particularly noteworthy because of the military alliance of May 22. It was obvious that Italy had

no mind for war, but it was not clear whether her declaration of neutrality issued on September 1 was the result of Mussolini's refusal to honor his bond or of Hitler's decision that he did not need Italy as he asserted in the Reichstag and in a telegram to the Duce. The other neighbors of Germany on the west and north had already declared their neutrality in advance of the outbreak of hostilities. A question still remained concerning the action of Britain and France both of whom ordered complete mobilization on September 1, but failed to declare war.

Apparently, both the British and French Governments still hoped against hope that something could be done to avert a European war. They warned Germany on the morning of September 1 that unless she was ready to suspend hostilities and withdraw from Polish soil they would go to Poland's aid. Since there was not a time limit and since Chamberlain in addressing Parliament threw a bouquet to Mussolini, suspicion immediately arose that the Munichmen might yet wiggle out of the promises to Poland. The next day Chamberlain admitted that the delay in a German reply might be due to consideration of a plan submitted by Mussolini for the cessation of hostilities and a conference of Great Britain, France, Poland, Germany, and Italy. He expressed British approval of this if Germany would withdraw her troops from Poland. The French Cabinet was deliberating while its Parliament passed a war appropriations bill; censorship was being clamped down, and provisions made for the evacuation of Paris. Bonnet had already indicated his approval of a conference without stipulating the withdrawal of German troops. Beck, however, while German bombs were falling around him in Warsaw, called for aid and refused any conference proposals, adding that he had no knowledge of an Italian plan anyway.

The suspense in Britain and France was finally ended on September 3. Early that morning the British and French Governments sent ultimatums, the first expiring at 11 A.M., the other at 5 P.M. When Germany failed to make formal reply to the demands of September 1, war ensued. At twenty minutes past eleven Ribbentrop gave the British Ambassador a long document justifying German action on the grounds of Polish atrocities and Polish aggression against the city of Danzig and Reich territory. Hitler in a proclamation to his armies blamed England but not France for the state of war. Apparently there was hope up to the last minute that France might possibly be detached from her ally, but it was in vain.

As Chamberlain said to Parliament, this was 'a sad day' and sadder for no one than for the British Prime Minister, because he was forced to admit, less than one year after his famous phrase of 'peace for our time,' that his appeasement policy had failed utterly. He tried to make amends by declaring that in the fight against 'brute force, bad faith, injustice, oppression, and persecution' he was certain that 'right' would prevail. Daladier in his broadcast to the nation did not look back, but rather sought to evoke that unity of France which had been lost for many a year. Both nations responded to the call to arms without ardor or enthusiasm, but with a grim, almost sullen, feeling that a nasty job had to be done. What made matters worse was the fact that they had to stand idly by while the triumphant German army crushed Poland in its first demonstration of *Blitzkrieg*.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### WAR AND RETROSPECT

IN CONTRAST with the outbreak of the World War in 1914, the declarations of war by France and Great Britain in 1939 made the general European situation little different from that of the previous three years. The struggle for allies, the anxieties of the neutrals, and the task of rearmament were quickened but not fundamentally altered after September 3. Furthermore, the initial dread of air raids about which so much had been said by both pacifists and military experts quickly passed in France and England where thousands of people who had fled the capital cities soon began to drift back to take up business 'as usual.' Indeed, for many months, the expected 'red' war in the West proved to be merely a continuation of the 'white' war that had begun with the German march into the Rhineland and the conflict in Spain in 1936. It was only on the sea and in Eastern Europe that catastrophic events occurred.

#### *1. Blitzkrieg and Sitzkrieg, 1939-40*

The Nazi campaign in Poland gave the world its first taste of modern mechanized warfare in full operation. Protected by strong fortifications in the West, and hoping that with the elimination of Poland the British and French Governments would willingly agree to a peaceful settlement, Hitler struck at the Poles with full force from three directions: from Slovakia on the south, from the Reich proper on the west of Poland, and from East Prussia on the north. Using his air fleet to demoralize and paralyze his opponents by bombing their concentrations and their means of communication and employing his tanks and motorized troops to isolate and complete the destruction of his enemy's forces, Hitler overran half of Poland in two weeks' time. A few points, such as Warsaw and the Westerplatte near Danzig, held out for two weeks more, but in vain. On September 17, Soviet Russia entered the field to help complete the subjection of the Poles. Molotov excused this violation of the Soviet-



Polish anti-aggression pact on the grounds that since the collapse of Poland was imminent and its Government in flight, the situation along the frontier of the U.S.S.R. was very grave and Russia's blood brothers in Poland were in danger.

Finally, Ribbentrop and Molotov, signing a treaty in Moscow on September 28 which partitioned Poland between Germany and Russia, declared that by this instrument they had made the beginning of a lasting peace in Eastern Europe. Moreover, the Reich and the Soviet Union expressed their joint opinion that peace between the Western allies and Germany was desirable and asserted that they intended to pursue, with the possible aid of a third Power, the aim of putting an end to the war. If their efforts failed, France and England would be to blame, and Russia and Germany would then 'consult each other regarding the necessary measures.' Molotov also asserted in a letter to Ribbentrop that the Soviet Union was ready 'to develop with all means economic relations and exchange of goods between Germany and Russia.'

Both the Soviet and the Reich professed to believe that Poland had been completely and finally disposed of. The Polish Government had fled to Rumania where it was interned, but by November 9 was replaced by a new one set up in France under Wladyslaw Raczkiewicz as President and General Wladyslaw Sikorski as Premier. This Government that continued to carry on the war witnessed within two years of the fall of Warsaw a turn of the wheel which actually made it an ally of the same U.S.S.R. that had helped to destroy former Poland.

In the autumn of 1939, many people wondered if the Soviet Union had not profited more by the developments in Eastern Europe than had Germany, for it not only acquired a great share of Poland without loss of life and equipment, but also seemed destined to establish its hegemony in the Baltic region. On the day that the treaty with Germany was signed, Russia concluded a mutual-assistance pact with Estonia under the terms of which she obtained the right to lease sites for naval and air bases and to garrison Russian armed forces on Estonian soil. Furthermore, the U.S.S.R. concluded similar treaties with Latvia on October 5 and with Lithuania on October 10. In a gesture of good-will the Union also handed over to Lithuania the city of Vilna which the Poles had held since 1920. That these treaties with the little Baltic states made Russia dominant over them seemed to be fully recognized by Germany who invited the

migration to the Reich of 'German citizens and German minority members from the Baltic States,' thus apparently withdrawing from the region in order to Germanize the annexed districts of conquered Poland.

Meanwhile, in the West after the first few days of tense anxiety, the contestants settled down to a *Sitzkrieg*. The fact is that as neither side was prepared to fight when war was declared, both concentrated upon the perfecting of their defenses against land and air attacks and upon the maintaining of a blockade on the one hand and the breaking of it on the other.

In Great Britain, Chamberlain reorganized his Government on the day that war was declared. He thereby established a War Cabinet of men who had long been associated with him, but with the one significant addition of Winston Churchill, who became First Lord of the Admiralty. Anthony Eden also reentered the Government, though not the War Cabinet, as Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs. Among the Dominions, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa declared war, the last after a split in the Cabinet had led to the replacement of Premier Hertzog by the First World War veteran, General Smuts. Eire alone proclaimed her neutrality. India and North Ireland supported Britain, while her allies, Egypt and Iraq, severed diplomatic relations with Germany. In Palestine both the Jews and Arabs promised their support of Great Britain.

In France, where on September 13 Daladier took over the posts of War and Foreign Affairs and relegated Bonnet to the Ministry of Justice, the Government launched a drive against the Communists who as elsewhere had taken up the cry that this was just another 'imperialist war.' Indeed, Daladier carried on a ruthless campaign against all who disagreed with his policies and actions. In establishing a war economy along totalitarian lines his objectives were not much different from Great Britain's, but in disregarding Parliament and clamping down upon the Opposition his methods were quite dissimilar and betrayed the great internal weakness of France in the face of the enemy.

Britain and France, however, quickly effected close military and economic collaboration. An Anglo-French Supreme War Council held its first meeting as early as September 12. Even before that, General Gamelin had been selected to head the land forces of both Powers in France, British Admirals were to take charge of naval operations, and Sir Cyril Newall was appointed

Chief of the Allied Air Fleets. On November 17, the Supreme War Council announced the establishment of an Anglo-French Coordinating Committee to effect the pooling of their economic resources. All this was in marked contrast with the situation in the First World War when unified command and economic co-operation were not brought about until the last year of war.

On the diplomatic front, Britain and France tried to woo the Reich's silent partner, Italy, without much success. Although the unusual silence of Mussolini concerning the Axis, and a Cabinet and Fascist Party shake-up at the end of October which removed reputedly pro-German men from power, suggested that possibly the Allies might win the Duce's friendship, Italy followed a course of neutrality that was more benevolent toward the Reich than toward France and Britain. Although a permanent mixed commission was established in October to deal with Anglo-Italian trade problems arising from the blockade, the curtailment of Italian commerce out of fear that imports might be diverted to the Reich caused considerable friction which was never eliminated.

France and Britain were much more successful in their relations with Turkey whom they sought to draw closer by making permanent the preliminary agreements of May and June. To be sure, Turkey was placed in a ticklish situation by the Soviet Union's new policy and by German and Italian designs in the Mediterranean. In September, after stating that a final agreement with the Western Powers was nearly completed, Turkish Foreign Minister Saraçoglu accepted an invitation to visit Moscow where he engaged in fruitless discussions with Turkey's long-time friend. Apparently Russia asked for Turkish neutrality in all circumstances, while Turkey wanted a Soviet pledge to refrain from disturbing the *status quo* in the Balkans or the Black Sea. The Turkish Premier stated officially, October 17, that the negotiations had broken down when the Russians altered their proposals in such a way as to make Turkish compliance with them inconsistent with Turkish obligations in relation to the Straits and to Britain and France. On October 31, Molotov countered with the explanation that Russia had merely wanted a mutual-assistance pact to protect Russia and to prevent ships of non-Black Sea Powers from passing through the Straits into the Black Sea. As soon as the negotiations with the U.S.S.R. had broken down, Turkey signed her agreement with Britain and France. In a fifteen-year mutual-assistance pact, the West-

ern Powers agreed to aid Turkey if she were attacked by a European Power. In return Turkey promised aid to them if aggression on the part of a European Power led to war in the Mediterranean or in case Britain and France had to fight to protect Rumania or Greece. In all other cases, Turkey would consult with the two Powers and would maintain benevolent neutrality. The Turks, however, made one significant exception to their promises: they were not to be compelled to fight the U.S.S.R.

Although Russia had failed in her attempt to tie Turkey more closely to her, she undertook to extend her influence into the stormy Balkans where Germany, Italy, and the Western Allies all had designs. The U.S.S.R. had long begrudged Rumania her possession of Bessarabia and was also concerned over the Bulgarian claim to the Dobrudja, but had been hampered in the development of her relations with the Balkan Powers by their fear of Communism. Nevertheless, the Kremlin, in keeping with the imperialistic policy adopted since August 23, sought to revive the sentiment of Pan-Slavism particularly among the peasants and intellectuals in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. But in spite of the exchanges of trade and air missions with Bulgaria, there was little cordial feeling on the part of the Government and court circles. Relations with Yugoslavia likewise remained cool.

Italy, on the other hand, apparently attempted to take advantage of Germany's temporary preoccupation elsewhere to revive her own former drive into the Balkans. Italo-Greek relations improved to the point where both Powers withdrew their troops from the Albanian-Greek frontier and exchanged letters which confirmed the Pact of Friendship of 1928. During November, Italy also concluded trade agreements with Bulgaria and Hungary, while rumors spread that King Victor Emanuel might be asked to take the Hungarian throne that had been vacant since 1918. In all this activity Italy seemed to be playing a lone hand against the threats of Communism, for her radio and press blasted away at the danger arising from her Axis partner's newfound friend. Furthermore, her trade agreements seemed to be a bid for the commerce that Germany desired. Yet the rapprochement with Greece did not cause Italy to cease her mutterings and threats against the guarantors of Greece — France and Great Britain.

For their part, the two Western Powers made no appreciable gains in the Balkan area after the conclusion of the Turkish pact.

Their efforts to divert supplies from Germany by offers to purchase exportable surpluses were treated coolly by countries who were in immediate danger of German military reprisals. They seconded Turkish attempts to create a solid Balkan bloc including Bulgaria which were defeated by the usual Balkan bickerings. While France and Britain apparently prevented Yugoslavia from allotting a larger share of its ore exports to Germany, they could not deter Rumania from signing a new economic agreement with the Reich on December 21 which gave Germany access to about one-third of the Rumanian oil production. Thus, the Allies seemed to be vying with Italy and the U.S.S.R. for second place in the Balkans with but little hope of ousting Germany from her position of economic and political predominance until they could defeat her in the field.

Meanwhile, the Soviet Union, though showing signs of a desire to treat Rumania as it had the small Baltic countries, became bogged down in its quarrel with Finland. It seems quite clear that Molotov and Stalin had expected Finland to follow the same course as Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, sign a mutual-assistance pact with the U.S.S.R., make frontier alterations, and permit the Union to occupy certain strategic points commanding the entrance to the Gulf of Finland and the approach to Leningrad. When Finland refused to do so, however, the Kremlin, apparently misled by false reports, believed that Finland was ripe for revolution and would welcome the Red Army as a liberating force. Then, after the breakdown of negotiations in mid-November, the Moscow press opened a barrage of criticism of Finland in much the same manner as the former Nazi attacks upon Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Frontier incidents soon occurred, and on November 29, after denunciation of its former non-aggression agreement, Moscow broke off diplomatic relations. Armed attack began on November 30 with the bombing of Helsinki while the Russians set up a puppet Government at Terijoki under Otto Kuusinen, who, although a Finn, had been a resident of Moscow for twenty years. This 'People's Government' quickly signed a mutual-assistance agreement with the Soviet and granted the concessions which Helsinki had refused. The Finns, however, supported by world opinion and aided materially by many countries including Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, gamely battled their giant foe and for a time checked the Russian onslaught.

After serious initial mistakes arising from lack of adequate

preparation to meet Finnish resistance, the Red Army smashed through the Mannerheim line on the Karelian Isthmus and forced Finland to capitulate in March 1940. Although the Powers had resurrected the League of Nations from its coma to condemn Russia's aggression and eject her from the League on December 14, they failed to give Finland sufficient assistance to make the League action anything more than a last death gasp. Both Norway and Sweden, out of fear of Soviet, or perhaps even German, reprisals, refused to allow the passage of Allied troops through their territory. Therefore, Finland made her peace with the U.S.S.R. on March 12 in a treaty by which she made concessions more serious for her than those demanded in the previous October and November. Russia thereby acquired the Karelian Isthmus including the city of Viipuri in the name of greater security for Leningrad, territory west and north of Lake Ladoga, and slight additions elsewhere including islands in the Gulf of Finland; also a lease of the Hangoe Peninsula in order to establish a naval base there; and free transit of goods as well as freedom of movement for non-military planes to and from Norway. Some of these gains, like those in the other Baltic states and Poland, were regarded by many as evidence that the Soviet Union was more eager to reinsure itself against German attack than to indulge in purely imperialistic exploits. On the other hand, the whole Russo-Finnish episode seemed to others but to confirm that bankruptcy of true Communism in Russia that had first been made obvious by the German-Soviet pact of August.

## *2. Reich Expansion, Fall of France, and Second Year of War*

Meanwhile, Germany and her Western opponents had done little more since the fall of Poland than exchange propaganda and views concerning peace. It seemed as if they had picked up where the First World War had ended with Maginot and Siegfried lines precluding *Blitzkrieg* and compelling the familiar war of position. Moreover, Hitler offered peace as the Kaiser had done in 1916; the British dropped leaflets on Germany calling for the repudiation of Hitler and the Nazis as a necessary preliminary for peace; Daladier tried to talk like Clemenceau and Chamberlain like Lloyd George and even Woodrow Wilson; and the Germans tried to separate the French from the British. It is true that there had been moments of excitement such as those when German submarines attacked the British fleet in its

base at Scapa Flow and when the *Graf Spee* was scuttled in the mouth of the River Plate after a losing fight with British warships. Then, too, in November and again in January, rumor spread that Germany was about to attack the Netherlands and Belgium. However, it was with the approach of spring that both sides began in earnest to plan for combat.

Hitler's first move was to confer with Mussolini at the Brenner Pass on March 18 with the apparent result that Italy opened a press campaign threatening to enter the war on the side of Germany, thus diverting attention from the area of intended action. Two days after the Brenner meeting, Daladier was replaced in France by Reynaud who declared that his aim was 'to wage war, and to wage war in all fields.' At the same time the British and French began casting about for means of strengthening the blockade especially in the North where Germany was using Norwegian coastal waters for shipments of iron ore as well as for passage to and from the open seas.

Seizing upon the pretext offered by the Allied mining of Norwegian waters, Hitler next launched a well-prepared and expertly conducted attack upon Denmark and Norway on April 9, which the Reich tried to disguise as a friendly occupation for the purpose of protecting them from Allied aggression. As Denmark offered no resistance to the smoothly functioning German military machine, she was brought in the course of a day under the complete domination of the country that had signed a non-aggression pact with her only ten months before. On the same day, by a combination of coordinated air and sea attacks, Trojan horse tactics, and overwhelming military superiority the Nazis captured most of Norway's leading cities and ports. The Norwegian Government, however, refused to capitulate, and fleeing northward through the less accessible parts of the country, called upon the people to resist and denounced the puppet Government of Major Quisling that the Germans had set up at Oslo.

With high hopes that this time Hitler had 'missed the bus,' the people of France and Britain awaited the action of their troops sent to dislodge the Nazis from Norway and to open a new front against Germany. But the Allied Governments again displayed their lack of preparation and their ineptitude. Their expeditions, lacking adequate equipment, particularly air forces, and handicapped by the German seizure of ports and landing fields, were forced to give up the struggle by the beginning of May except at Narvik in the North. There they fought on until June

9 when they hurried home where they were desperately needed.

A month before, Hitler had sent his armies roaring into the Low Countries on the excuse that Britain and France were planning to attack the Ruhr Valley through Belgium and Holland and that those two little countries had violated their own neutral status by taking measures against a possible German invasion. The real reason for the blow was the same as that for the invasion of Norway and Denmark — the need of better bases and strategic positions from which to launch attacks upon England and France. Accompanying the German entry into Belgium and the Netherlands went widespread air attacks upon French industrial and communications centers from Calais to Lyons. Once more extraordinarily effective military tactics, superior air power, mechanized forces, and the usual deceit and treachery brought victory to the Nazis in five days in the Netherlands where Rotterdam was laid waste in a needless stroke of frightfulness. This barbarity was committed, it would seem, to furnish a duly filmed example of what would happen to any small nation that betrayed its 'neutrality,' which the Nazis always defined in terms that really meant not genuine neutrality but a pro-German attitude.

The attack on the Netherlands demonstrated again that the Allied action was always too late and too little, but it also served to force a shift in the British Government which had been long in coming. Chamberlain's majority in the House of Commons had already been reduced from 222 after Munich to 81 on May 8. When the Reich attacked the Low Countries on May 10, he resigned leaving the way open for the most popular man of the hour, Winston Churchill, to become Prime Minister. With characteristic vigor Churchill threw his whole energy into the construction of a union Government around a small War Cabinet, although he retained such men as Chamberlain in positions of lesser responsibility. Even more characteristic was his declaration before the Commons of May 13 that he had 'nothing to offer but blood and toil and tears and sweat.' This terse estimate of the situation proved all too true, for the attempt to stem Hitler's invasion of Belgium turned out to be unsuccessful. The French, British, and Belgian forces soon found themselves in danger of encirclement because of a Nazi break through the French lines near Sedan. On May 28, King Leopold threw down his arms and surrendered, thus leaving the British and French forces whom he had forewarned of his decision in danger of cap-



ture. Weygand, who had succeeded Gamelin as French Commander-in-Chief, tried in vain to save the entrapped forces. Nevertheless, thousands struggled toward the sea and were miraculously rescued at Dunkerque, although with the loss of all equipment. Still, the epic evacuation from Dunkerque represented a moral victory which undoubtedly meant to the British what the stand at Verdun had meant to the French in the First World War.

After Belgium had capitulated, the battle of France witnessed the same relentless and seemingly irresistible advance of the German army. The resultant strain caused another Cabinet shift in France, June 5, when Daladier was dropped completely and General de Gaulle brought into the Government. Both he and Reynaud had pleaded for years for the mechanization of the French army that, had it been accomplished, might have saved France from defeat in 1940. No amount of ministerial shuffling could save France now, however, for Hitler launched on June 5 the most terrific attack of the war up to that time against the hastily improvised defenses of western France. Furthermore, while the French and British forces were steadily being rolled back, Mussolini announced his entry into the war on June 11, hoping apparently to share in the spoils of the defeated Allies and to gain hegemony in the Mediterranean. Three days later the Germans entered Paris, while Reynaud frantically sought more help from Britain and the United States. The French Government moved to Tours, then to Bordeaux; the roads of France were choked with bewildered refugees; fifth columnists did their utmost to heighten confusion; even within the Government those who still feared Communism began to urge their counsels of defeat.

At Bordeaux some of the Ministers wanted to flee to Algiers whence they might continue the struggle, but those in favor of surrender won out. Marshal Pétain, replacing Reynaud on June 16, immediately sued for peace on what he hoped would be honorable terms. After a conference between Hitler and Mussolini at Munich on June 18, the armistice terms which were to serve as preliminary to a final peace settlement were drawn up. France signed them with Germany, June 22, at Compiègne in the same railway coach in which Foch had met the Germans in 1918. Two days later she agreed to the Italian demands at a meeting place near Rome. At the same time what was left of France outside the zone of German occupation deserted the principles of

the French Revolution — Liberty, Equality, Fraternity — for those of a 'New Order' — Work, Family, Fatherland — when the two houses of Parliament voted away their own power and conferred the title of 'Chief of the French State' upon the aged Marshal. But, as in the case of all the countries conquered by Hitler except Denmark, 'Free France' rose again under the standards of General de Gaulle whose French National Committee was recognized by the British Government on June 28. Henceforth, and especially as the Pétain Government was forced step by step to bend to Hitler's will, it was de Gaulle and not the puppet Government at Vichy that stood forth as representative of France, the ally of Britain, and the foe of Germany.

While Hitler's defeat of France, who had dominated Europe only ten years before, epitomized the trend of the past decade, Great Britain's stubborn refusal to surrender under the merciless bombardment of the *Luftwaffe* in the autumn of 1940 gave hope for a different development in the next. Aside from Hitler's failure to subdue England, however, there was almost no other ground in the ensuing year for believing that he and his partners could be stopped. Soviet Russia continued to expand with the acquisition from Rumania of Bessarabia and with the incorporation of the Baltic states into the Union. Germany and Italy dictated a cession by Rumania of districts in Transylvania to Hungary. Bulgaria secured part of the Dobrudja. Slovakia, Hungary, and Rumania had no choice but to accept an invitation to adhere to the Axis. Although Italy was unexpectedly checked and even thrust back when she attacked Greece in the late autumn, she was saved by Hitler who also subjugated Yugoslavia and aligned Bulgaria with the Axis as he advanced to defeat the Greeks and their gallant British supporters. These operations in the Balkans, together with the German reinforcement of Italian troops in Libya, put Great Britain in a very precarious position in the Mediterranean that was only partially offset by British success in driving the Italian forces out of East Africa.

Meanwhile, the totalitarian drive for a 'New Order' in Europe became a battle for the 'New Order' throughout the world with the signing by Germany, Italy, and Japan of a tripartite pact on September 27, 1940. Under the terms of this treaty which aimed to 'establish and maintain a new order of things,' Japan agreed 'to recognize and respect the leadership of Germany and Italy in the establishment of a new order in Europe,' while Germany and Italy accorded to Japan the same position in 'Greater East Asia.'

The three countries also promised 'to assist one another with all political, economic, and military means when one of the three contracting Powers is attacked by a Power at present not involved in the European war or in the Sino-Japanese conflict.' Thus, the treaty seemed to be designed to restrain the United States from entering the war. However, some fourteen months later, when the United States through the Lend-Lease Bill, shoot-at-sight orders, and similar moves advanced to the verge of a declared war upon Hitler, Japan began to give prominence to a secret verbal understanding whereby Japan was not obliged to fight in the Pacific unless she chose to do so. In any case Japan alternated between a policy of cajoling and threatening the United States while at the same time she heightened the possibility of a clash with Great Britain by occupying portions of Indo-China and menacing the Dutch East Indies and Singapore.

Two dramatic events in 1941, however, clarified the situation both in Europe and the Far East. The first was Hitler's sudden attack, June 22, upon his 'lasting and firm' friend Stalin. To the surprise of everyone and the confusion of all prophets, the Soviet made a defiant and determined stand against the hitherto irresistible German army and, when 'General Winter' began to take command, gave Hitler's troops their first taste of a major defeat. At the same time, the British, whose equipment had been replenished with American supplies, once more began a drive against the Axis forces in Libya. At this juncture came the second surprise move when Japan struck at Pearl Harbor, thus bringing to an end the neutrality of the United States who declared war on Japan the next day, December 8, and found herself at war with Germany and Italy three days later. In this way the war that began without declaration in Spain in 1936 and in the Far East in 1937 became world-wide by drawing the Eurasian and the American Continents into it. Although dark days still remained ahead for the opponents of the totalitarian trio, Russian and American entry into the war encouraged them to believe that the outcome might be victory rather than defeat or stalemate.

### *3. The Totalitarian Decade in Retrospect*

The reasons for the totalitarian victories in the Second World War are to a great degree the same as the reasons for the rise of the totalitarian states in the decade of the nineteen-thirties. This

rise, in turn, is part and parcel of the whole problem of why the peace, at one time so confidently believed to be established, in the end failed. In discussing the immediate origins of the Second World War, however, there is no need to speak of Italy separately from Germany, since Fascism lost most of its distinctive characteristics as it was slowly swallowed up by Nazism. Furthermore, without Hitler and his movement, it is not very likely that Mussolini's Fascism — nor even Japanese aggressiveness — would have had a chance to survive as a 'dynamic' and peace-disturbing element.

The obvious cause then of the failure of peace and the defeat of the Western Powers was Hitler's fanatical determination to raise Germany to a position of domination for a 'thousand years' without counting the cost in blood and treasure either to the Germans or to the peoples whom they tried to subdue. Making allowances for the differences in time and place, there is a striking similarity in the aims and methods of Hitler and those of Napoleon whose mastery of the French nation was used as a tool for an attempted mastery of Europe. Both men might have utilized the forces they had evoked from their respective peoples to construct a better world for everybody including their own Frenchmen and Germans, but both men failed to do so. H. G. Wells has written a condemnation of Napoleon which, if Germany is substituted for France, fits Hitler perfectly:

... All Europe and America, stirred by the first promise of a new age, was waiting for him. Not France alone. France was in his hand, his instrument, to do with as he pleased, willing for peace, but tempered for war like an exquisite sword. There lacked nothing to this great occasion but a noble imagination. And failing that, Napoleon could do no more than strut upon the crest of this great mountain of opportunity like a cockerel on a dunghill. The figure he makes in history is one of almost incredible self-conceit, of vanity, greed, and cunning, of callous contempt and disregard of all who trusted him, and of a grandiose aping of Caesar, Alexander, and Charlemagne which would be purely comic if it were not caked over with human blood. Until, as Victor Hugo said in his tremendous way, 'God was bored by him,' and he was kicked aside into a corner to end his days. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Further comment is scarcely necessary. It is true that the German people wanted peace as much as others did; that by

<sup>1</sup> H. G. Wells, *Outline of History* (3d ed. New York, 1921), pp. 898-99.

1938 they had become the willing and well-tempered instruments of Hitler and his party; that, had Hitler had a broader vision than the outlook of a half-starved, flop-house debater inspired by the false and lying traditions of 'blood' superiority and a narrowly nationalistic Pan-Germanism, he might have used his power to make Germany, which he had raised to a position of equality with other Great Powers, a partner in a better international world order. By attempting, however, to play the old, old game of imperialism and to make Germany supreme while relegating all others to a lower level either as junior partners or as slaves, Hitler sought not a genuine 'new order,' but a very ancient one that can never be accepted as the fulfillment either of the ideals of humanity or the trend of history. Moreover, once set upon this course, Hitler could not check the impulsion toward further conquest; to stop short would have meant revolution and downfall.

To probe beneath the surface, however, there was no one man, nation, or movement that was solely responsible for the failure of peace in the nineteen-thirties. All Europe and the world shared in it, though not in the way Hitler and his efficient propaganda machine would have the world believe. His picture of the underlying causes of the European conflict is essentially this: The Jews and Socialists were responsible for Germany's defeat in the First World War; the victors framed the wicked Treaty of Versailles in order to keep Germany in a state of degradation and inequality; Jewry-Bolshevism-Democracy sought to perpetuate this condition; and when Germany under Hitler's leadership strengthened herself and began to throw off the shackles, this triple-headed monster tried to encircle Germany and keep her down. All this, according to Nazi propaganda, accounted for Germany's secret rearmament, the false promises, and the lies which were deemed necessary in order to enable Germany to 'counter-attack' and to free herself from her oppressors. This is a curious picture which too many people, in America as well as in Europe, accepted.

Without wasting time on such straw men of propaganda as the legend of Jewry-Bolshevism-Democracy, even though it has been given credence by people who ought to know better, it may be said of the Treaty of Versailles that it was not nearly as bad as the Nazis have tried to make out. Admittedly much in it was politically and psychologically inept. It gave less than the victors had promised by the terms of the Armistice of November 11,

1918; it sought to pin upon Germany a moral guilt which, in the light of history, all Great Powers must share; its fulfillment depended upon the preponderant power of the victors, thus failing to give Germany any inducement to live up to it; but it did not cause Germany's miserable economic conditions, nor was it incapable of gradual revision. In the case of reparations, for example, Germany never paid more than about one cent on the dollar of the bill, and if payments in kind are left to one side — the value of which will never be agreed upon — and cash payments alone considered, Germany was apparently ahead of the game. She borrowed much more money than she paid out and then repudiated in one way or another a good share of what she borrowed. Naturally the Nazis do not talk about this shifting of the 'burden of reparations' to the shoulders of Germany's creditors. In fact, it was the destructiveness of the war, as James T. Shotwell has pointed out in *What Germany Forgot*,<sup>2</sup> and not reparations that caused Germany's misery. Although the story of reparations is an extreme example of what happened to Versailles, the treaty was constantly revised in one way or another and the pace of change was constantly being accelerated. Hitler, however, was not really interested in mere revision; he wanted a complete reversal. That was the underlying reason for his attack upon Versailles.

Furthermore, it is a lie that the Powers sought to keep Germany down and to encircle her. Time after time from 1936 to 1939, France and Great Britain made offers to Germany that, had they been accepted, would have given her equality and even preponderance in Eastern Europe. There was only one condition attached and that was the acceptance of peaceful international cooperation in some kind of reorganized Europe. In other words, Hitler was virtually offered the opportunity of a second peace conference in which the mistakes of the first could be remedied with Germany taking an equal place at the table, but he could not accept because he did not want merely German equality. Since he wanted a 'New Order' in which Germany would be supreme, he had to turn his back on a peace conference where arms were left outside the door.

The real fault that lay with the victor Powers at the end of the World War was their failure to attempt a genuine democratic new order along the lines suggested by liberals all over the world and ably epitomized by Woodrow Wilson. Understandable

<sup>2</sup> New York, 1940.

human motives of hatred and revenge and a short-sighted view of the way to guarantee security led France to dominate the Continent for more than a decade with the express purpose of nailing down the *status quo* and the glaring inequalities established by the peace treaties. Great Britain sought to revert to balance-of-power politics while the British Dominions along with the United States tried to escape responsibility by sticking their heads in the sands of isolation. Not once, but time after time, Great Powers, and especially the United States which had intervened to help win the war, refused out of a short-sighted evaluation of self-interest to take responsibilities in building a solid peace. The fact was that having won the war the democracies were weary, and having swept such symbols of power as the Kaiser, the army, and colonies out of the German house, they left it empty, inglorious, and shabby. Little wonder that in the maladjustments of the post-war period, when to the Germans the past looked golden, the present red, and the future black, men accustomed to the comradeship of the trenches and the goosestep of faded glories banded together to kill the Republic and overturn the settlement which offered Germany little cause for loyalty to peace.

Then came the economic depression with its reinforcement of the war's political, economic, and social effects, and shortly thereafter Hitler. French hegemony slipped from the grasp of the weakened and disunited France. Under the guidance of traditionalists, Britain, instead of seeking to build a genuine collective security system, still tried to play balance-of-power politics allowing Germany and Italy in Europe and Japan in the Orient to become menaces to peace. But the conservatives were not alone responsible for the international muddle. Liberals and progressives throughout the post-war years in their effort to avoid war forgot that the menace is not the use of force in and of itself, but the ends and the means of exercising it. Never dreaming of going to the absurd length of advocating the abolition of a police force at home, they too often concentrated upon eliminating force in international affairs when what was needed was an international police force capable of stopping aggression and of bringing disputes into court. Moreover, the conflict of views between the traditionalists who were right in wanting strong fighting forces and the liberals who were also right in wanting international cooperation prevented the satisfactory accomplishment of either objective. Thus, Hitler became the victor in what proved to be an out-and-out struggle for power whose true character was

not generally recognized until it was almost too late to stop him.

In summary, if France and Britain, together with the United States, the British Dominions, and the smaller states of the world, had pursued a policy of conciliation and of justice for all in the first post-war decade, or had they consistently pursued power politics in the second, there probably would have been no totalitarian triumph.

Why did the victor nations, the 'have' Powers, pursue this fatuous course of halfway policies? Why did Hitlerism emerge at all? What, in other words, were the underlying reasons for the turmoil and the strife of the totalitarian decade in which everything from domestic politics in such countries as Russia, Germany, and Italy to the conduct of international relations seemed to be turned upside down? Undoubtedly, much of the topsy-turviness of the period may be ascribed to the effects of the First World War and the economic depression with their aftermaths of inhumanity, faithlessness, primitive tribalism, mass emotionalism, and crude gangsterism. In addition to producing these relatively temporary results, however, the war hastened the development of movements long in process of formation, and the economic depression made them predominant in the totalitarian decade, thus destroying the outstanding characteristics of the nineteenth century.

The old European order had retained down to the outbreak of the First World War certain elements of that 'European Concert' that arose out of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars of 1792-1815. The principles which tacitly underlay this 'Concert' were, first of all, the idea that the Great Powers, since they possessed the greater strength, should wield the preponderant influence in European international affairs; in the second place, the concept that all Powers great and small had a common interest in peace; third, the acceptance of a standard of international morality — not a very high one, but including a certain sense of honor with respect to pledges and agreements. Along with this unorganized and admittedly weak political system, there existed an international economic community in which Great Britain played the leading rôle. Because of Britain's success in identifying her own interests with the general interests, however, the condition of British economic and naval preponderance contributed to the solidarity of international society. Thus, throughout the nineteenth century and nearly up to 1914 the world was an area kept free for the traders of all nations by the British Navy and



unified by the preponderance of the pound sterling. Exchange and communication were easy; a stable monetary unit existed; confidence and security reigned.

Within each European country society and government were still dominated by the 'upper' classes. In some countries, especially the Eastern European ones, they were still the aristocracy of birth; in others they were the bourgeoisie or aristocracy of money which was more or less intertwined by marriage with the aristocracy of birth and easily carried on the traditions inherited from the eighteenth century. Again, except perhaps for sections of Eastern Europe, these traditions were still based upon classical education which perpetuated the refined humanism of Greece and Rome as transmitted by modern commentators. Furthermore, the tradition included a faith in the supremacy of reason over emotion. One took for granted such things as the ability of science to create a better world, the idea of progress in spiritual attainments, and above all a sense of stability and security.

Since by 1914 the political and economic unity of the nineteenth-century world had already begun to disintegrate because of the development of exaggerated nationalism, what the World War and the economic depression did was greatly to accelerate the process of change and to break the last vestiges of a European Concert and a world-wide free-trade area. Then, too, the war decimated the European aristocracy, for the flower of German youth, of the English public schools, of France, and of a half-dozen other countries died on the battlefield. Furthermore, the war and the depression brought to the fore the masses of marching men who were ready, under emotional leadership, to seek a new world. The statesmen in the democracies, instead of trying to lead these masses forward, attempted to take them back to nineteenth-century stability, to the 'normalcy' that was gone. Such a new international institution as the League of Nations, for example, was but the organization of the old Concert made world-wide. As it carefully preserved the arrogant sovereignty of its members, retained balance-of-power politics, and avoided serious consideration of the basic economic and political problems, it sank into a state of helplessness. Moreover, in domestic affairs politicians were more interested in keeping their jobs than in genuine political leadership; business men in making money than in reconstructing a sound economy.

This was a perfect condition of affairs for the Lenins and Stalins, the Hitlers and Mussolinis. They had nothing to offer

but historically old ideas furbished by new words. Even Communism was the last of the early nineteenth-century Utopias, but it rode into power in Russia as a result of careful organization, clever manipulation of the ignorant masses, and a ruthless use of police power, only to become in the course of twenty years a thinly disguised autocracy with proletarian trimmings and machine worship in place of the former grand dukes, flamboyant ikons, and tinselly ballets. Fascism and Nazism fundamentally relied upon the same principles as the despots of all ages except that they streamlined their application to fit the machine age. Therefore, they do not represent, as some allege, a 'wave of the future' merely filmed over by such a 'scum' of brutality as accompanies every revolution, but the dregs of the past that lay beneath the stream of civilization until stirred up by war and economic misery. A decade is much too short a time in which to judge whether or not these dregs will remain at the top when stability is again achieved at some time in the future. There is nothing inevitable, however, about the establishment either of totalitarianism or of democracy. What comes out of these turbulent times depends upon what men want badly enough to strive for, diligently and persistently.

It is already clear, however, that the shocks to the structure of Western civilization that came in the totalitarian decade have caused men to take stock of themselves and their surroundings. The conclusions that may be drawn from the inventory contain both encouraging and discouraging elements, but on the whole they give reason for hope. For one thing, since the organized movement for world peace is little more than a hundred years old, the tension and war caused by Nazi-Fascist activity and ideology may simply represent one of those historically familiar periods of reaction against a new movement. After all, the organized effort to achieve world peace and the attempt to establish genuine democracy are historically but puling infants which are likely to receive many set-backs before reaching maturity. A more important consideration for the immediate future, however, is that men have begun to realize the value of certain democratic principles as they have been challenged or destroyed. Herein lies the hope of an acceptable 'new order' which will attempt to apply those principles more successfully than has been done in the past.

The study of the totalitarian decade also suggests certain conclusions concerning the achievement of a more satisfactory

social order and a more durable peace. First, it is clear that winning a war constitutes no guarantee of genuine peace which has to be painstakingly reconstructed under the ablest possible leadership. If men of good-will, of broad outlook and liberal education fail, or if they shirk their responsibilities, Pied Pipers will arise to lead the masses toward a new hell of misery and destruction. In the second place, the fatuous attempt to draw a distinction between domestic and foreign policy must be abandoned. The totalitarian despots have already demonstrated this relationship, for they quickly turned the Spanish Civil War into an international one and just as quickly converted World War II into civil war. Thirdly, just as a satisfactory social order must take account of the essential dignity of each individual, international policy must recognize that of each nation. This means that a course must be sought between the callousness of *laissez-faire* and the studied brutality of totalitarianism. In the future there must be, in addition to a more careful consideration of everyone's rights, a far greater emphasis upon the individual's and the nation's responsibilities in a world of disappearing frontiers and ever-speedier means of communication. Efforts to escape responsibility behind such bulwarks as the Maginot line and the English Channel have proved to be futile and even disastrous. The United States is no exception, for if it seeks to hide behind the Atlantic and Pacific, it may well lose the Washington-Jefferson-Lincoln tradition. Finally, instead of emphasis upon nationalistic divisions there must be education for unity which stresses the common heritage of man as a result of his age-long humanistic aspirations and ideals. Because of his narrow, fanatical Germanism Hitler has treated his neighbors in a way that Great Powers in the nineteenth century adopted only in dealing with 'inferior' Africans and Asiatics. That concept, whether applied by Nazis or others, of a world half-free and half-slave must be wiped out.

If some of these lessons and their implications are learned, and an effort made to profit by them even though the effort can never be completely successful, the totalitarian decade will be set down in history as one of those transitional periods when what had gone before seemed utterly lost and what was coming could not yet be foreseen. The general temper of the decade has been one of uncertainty and despair, frankly confessed by both liberals and conservatives and ill-concealed by the bravado of the totalitarian despots and their henchmen. Out of it, however, has come at

least one good: Men have been compelled to recognize that, since they can neither go back nor stand still, as many sought to do in the decade of the twenties, they must summon up new courage and press forward.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

SINCE footnotes giving references have been employed only to indicate the source of statistics, such quotations as are taken from other writers on the totalitarian decade, and contradictory accounts of significant happenings, the purpose of this note is to indicate the sources most used for this book. As a general rule an effort has been made throughout to rely as far as possible upon such primary sources as published documents (treaties, communiqués, diplomatic correspondence, and the like), speeches, articles and memoirs of government officials and other men of affairs, and the writings of journalists and correspondents who were in a position to give first-hand information. While many summaries and interpretations of events by non-participants have also been studied, especially if the authors had access to source material not itself readily obtainable, no systematic attempt has been made even to glance through all of them.

For documents and speeches the handiest single collection has proved to be the annual *Documents on International Affairs, 1928-1937* (London, 1929-39), edited for the Royal Institute of International Affairs by J. W. Wheeler-Bennett and Stephen Heald. This has been supplemented for the period since 1937 and for that before, especially with respect to speeches, by *Speeches and Documents on International Affairs, 1918-1937* (A. B. Keith, ed. 2 vols. New York, 1938), the *New York Times*, the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, the *Bulletin of International News*, and the collected speeches of individual statesmen of which several — especially English, French, and Russian — have been published. Also the weekly *L'Europe Nouvelle* (Paris) and the monthly *International Conciliation* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) have been useful not only for sources but also for articles of merit, while *Weltgeschichte der Gegenwart in Dokumenten* (Essen, 1936 ff.) for 1934-37, Karl Schwendemann's *Abrüstung und Sicherheit* (2 vols. Berlin, 1936), and Fritz Berber's *Diktat von Versailles* (Berlin, 1939) and *Locarno* (Berlin, 1936) have been valuable as revealing, through the selection and editing of material, the German point of view concerning the years and the topics covered. For the immediate background of World War II, the American editions of the *British War Blue Book* (New York, 1939), the *French Yellow Book* (New York, 1940), and the German *Documents on the Events Preceding the Outbreak of War* together with later German *White Books* (New York: German Library of Information, 1940) were utilized with occasional references to the German and French originals for purposes of checking the translations. There are a few personal records which have thrown light on the places left dark by the documents: J. Alvarez del

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Anyone writing on Europe since 1930 must feel an especial indebtedness to the remarkably large and unusually able group of journalists and newspaper correspondents who have covered the news from day to day or have interpreted it over the radio or in periodicals and books. Among those whose writings, published either in periodicals or books, have been most valuable for this work are: Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Hanson W. Baldwin, Frederick T. Birchall, T. A. Bisson, H. N. Brailsford, William Henry Chamberlin, Robert Dell, Walter Duranty, Lawrence A. Fernsworth, Louis Fischer, M. W. Fodor, G. T. Garratt, G. E. R. Gedyce, John Gunther, Liddell Hart, D. Graham Hutton, H. V. Kaltenborn, Herbert L. Matthews, Edgar Ansel Mowrer, Pierre van Paassen, Vincent Sheean, William L. Shirer, Otto D. Tolischus, F. A. Voigt, and Alexander Werth. They constitute an Anglo-American galaxy impossible to duplicate in any previous decade. To this list must be added André Géraud (Pertinax) and Geneviève Tabouis for France, Casimir Smogorzewski of Poland, William Martin of Switzerland, and Gustav Stolper, Johannes Steel, and Konrad Heiden representing Austria and Germany.

Another feature that distinguishes the pre-war period of the nineteen-thirties from that before 1914 is the research and publication program of such organizations as the Foreign Policy Association in the United States and the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London. Without the weekly *Foreign Policy Bulletin* and the carefully documented semi-monthly *Foreign Policy Reports*, prepared in New York with the advantage of far greater facilities than most individuals can command, there would be many more gaps in this work particularly on the side of continental European developments and points of view. In addition to the above reports, members of the Foreign Policy Association staff have published valuable books of which the most useful for this work are: Raymond L. Buell, *Poland* (3d ed. New York, 1939); and Vera Micheles Dean, *Europe in Retreat* (3d ed. New York, 1941). For a day-to-day record, together with quotations from the European press, the Royal Institute's fortnightly *Bulletin of International News* has been valuable, while its summary of world affairs by years, *Survey of International Affairs* (to 1938) by A. J. Toynbee and others, has frequently been relied upon both for material and interpretation. In addition to these two publications and the *Documents on International Affairs* already mentioned, the Royal Institute has produced or sponsored the excellent bi-monthly journal *International Affairs*; many monographs of first quality such as *Nationalism* (1940), *Raw Materials* (1940), *South-Eastern Europe* (1939),

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